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# The Politics and Principles of Germany's Entrance Into the League of Nations

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**THE POLITICS AND PRINCIPLES OF GERMANY'S  
ENTRANCE INTO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS**

**by  
R. DEANE CONRAD**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## INTRODUCTION

For as long as men have made war upon each other they have sought to form alliances for peace. To be sure, the principles that were enunciated in past centuries might not be found very sophisticated or complex in this age of complicated and changing political systems.<sup>1</sup> Those early alliances were hardly organizations, and the peace they strove for was to be achieved by conquest.<sup>2</sup> Still, all the while men have somehow retained the notion that recourse to war is not necessarily inevitable, nor an inextricable part of man's nature.

Since men grouped themselves into nations, and the fighting unit expanded from the singular to the plural, other men have put their minds to devising some form of association which would abolish physical strength as the determining factor in human relations. Physical strength in this context is to be

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<sup>1</sup>For example, the Amphictyonic Council of Greece, which was religious in character; and the political philosophy of Plato, which held that homogeneity of stock ought to preclude warfare. Republic, Book V, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup>John Sylvester Hemleben, Plans for World Peace through Six Centuries. (Chicago, 1943), pp. xi-xii.

understood as comprising the machines men operate as an extension of their own prowess.

As men formed more precise and definable political units, more precise plans emerged to bring order to the chaos of a world ruled by the mighty. Of course, if an individual nation were, by itself, overwhelmingly powerful and so could establish in effect one world girdling nation, the problem would disappear. There might, to be sure, arise then problems of civil wars and revolutions, but that is not our concern here. We address ourselves to the question of keeping peace among nations since it is these of which the world is made.

Statemanship has grown as complex as the world to which it attempts to bring order. More than ever there is a need to find causal lines running from thought to deed and vice versa. This is not to satisfy some logician's schema, but rather to provide an ever clearer and more detailed picture of the factors which motivate the response of a particular nation to a given international situation.

One operates inevitably within the context of one's own society. The greater part of our thought is conditioned by a thousand years of orientation to ancestral behavior.<sup>3</sup> When the

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<sup>3</sup>This is not an attempt to establish the philosophy of "race remembrance" as an operating principle or even to identify the above statement as within the same context. It is merely an expression of the conservative nature of man in society.

term "Thousand Year Reich" was chosen to describe the regime of Hitler, it was meant to presage its endurance into the future. What it pointed to, in reality, was the preceding millenium which provided the soil out of which grew the Third Reich.<sup>4</sup>

War, as it was studied in medieval times, had a definite place in the lives of peoples. Grotius, the father of international law, devoted the major portion of his work to determining when a war was "just."<sup>5</sup> Until recent times war itself was never questioned, only the conduct thereof. Twentieth century apologists for war concede that the humanization of war is all right, but insist that war is a part of nature, that it purifies and is necessary.<sup>6</sup> "But it is quite another matter if the object is to abolish war entirely and to deny its necessary

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<sup>4</sup>See: The Politics of Cultural Despair by Fritz Stern. Max Weber discusses the force of the "idea" in determining the behavior of Nations in the political arena in his book, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, (New York: Oxford, 1947), p. 299.

<sup>5</sup>Grotius' best known work is: De jure belli ac pacis, written in 1625.

<sup>6</sup>General Friedrich von Bernhardi wrote: "We are accustomed to regard war as a curse, and refuse to recognize it as the greatest factor in the furtherance of culture and power." Germany and the Next War, (New York: Chas. A. Eron, 1914) p. 11.

General Hans von Seeckt was violently opposed to the League, to arbitration, or to any form of forswearing war as completely unnatural.

Schiller wrote "Ode to Peace" for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony but in "Braut von Messina" he also wrote the line: "War enables all that is mean."

place in historical development."<sup>7</sup>

This aspiration (for peace) is directly antagonistic to the great universal laws which rule all life. War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow, which excludes every advancement of the race, and therefore all real civilization. "War is the father of all things."<sup>8</sup> The sages of antiquity long before Darwin recognized this.<sup>9</sup>

What this line of reasoning fails to comprehend is the fact that war, since the advent of machines, is no longer natural. Thus there cannot be any biological necessity; man will not improve his speed as a runner nor that of his progeny by driving in fast motorcars. Biologically he has achieved nothing. To speak of biological development and purification through war is completely false for the same reason. It is not necessarily the strong and brave who survive a war. Indeed, it could be argued that it is they who are the first to die.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Friedrich von Bernhardi, Germany and the Next War (New York: Charles A. Eron, 1914), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup>See: Claus Wagner's work "Der Krieg als Schaffendes Weltprinzip."

<sup>9</sup>Bernhardi, op. cit. p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>"War spares not the brave but the cowardly." Anacreon: The Greek Anthology, book 7, epigram 160. Translated by J. M. Edmonds.

It would be better, in arguing this point, to approach it categorically, establishing the dichotomy between the Darwinian theory and the concept that war (as men wage it) is a necessary part of that theory. The degree of technology to which weapons had advanced would be a nonessential for such consideration. But for present purposes it is sufficient to work with the added light of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup>

War in the twentieth century has shown that there is no longer any such question to be asked. But it was a nineteenth-century Germany which precipitated the Great War. And it was this same Germany which petitioned for and gained entry into the League of Nations. Great and influential minds spoke of international organizations for peace before and since King George of Bohemia enunciated his grand scheme.<sup>12</sup> But what were these ideas against schoolbooks which, if they mentioned such concepts at all, placed them in the towers to which they consigned those who believed in them? And what were they

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<sup>11</sup> Darwin cautioned against just such misuse of his theories when he produced his work on the survival of the fittest.

<sup>12</sup> Among others: Dante, Grotius, Rousseau, and Kant. George of Podebrad, king of Bohemia in the fifteenth century, outlined a plan of peace which was the precursor of all subsequent schemes to avoid war as the relationship between sovereign entities. The document itself is significant in that it demonstrates a long history in man's efforts to organize for peace.



against the overwhelming, almost primordial, dictum that war is an ennobling experience? That idea had two sides to it. For indeed, it was only in war that all the manly virtues could be exercised and displayed. War brought out these virtues in those within whom they would otherwise have no chance. Stendahl could provide another route, the black of the clergy, but he wrote of an earlier time and of a different place.<sup>13</sup> If the world were not inherently conservative it would not survive. It is therefore not surprising that the principles upon which nations operate are reactionary and archaic. The idea of a League of Nations in the context of Nineteenth-century Europe was far too radical to find real acceptance on the part of policymakers. For there is no question but that nations would have to forsake a certain amount of what was then taken to be included in the nation of sovereignty.<sup>14</sup> The concept of sovereignty drawn out to its inevitable and undeniable conclusions is ultimately impossible. But nations cling to it and guard against its slightest erosion more fiercely now than at any time in the history of nationstates. Any international organization, if it is to be

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<sup>13</sup> Stendhal's great novel *Le Rouge et Le Noir* presents the military and the clergy as the only two possible avenues of vertical mobility in society prior to the twentieth century.

<sup>14</sup> See: William Leo Lucey, S.J. *"The International Society: Nature and Organization"* (Worcester, Mass.: College of the Holy Cross Press, 1948), p. 14.

effective, must commit nations to behavior completely antithetical to their past histories. And those histories grip to the very soul of the nation. They are a part of the unconscious that influences men's actions.<sup>15</sup> And statesmen are, after all, men subject to the same environmental forces as their fellows. There can be no other explanation for the madness that overcomes an entire state for brief periods of history.<sup>16</sup> There is, for example, a Prussian mind as distinct from some other group characteristic of some other people imbued with a different life-style - a unique perspective resulting from the primordial influence of some other specific environment.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See: Alfred Weber, "Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie," Leyden, A. W. Sythoff, 1935.

<sup>16</sup> F. W. Foerster, Europe and the German Question, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940), p. 208.

<sup>17</sup> Foerster, op. cit., p. 63-64.

## II. THE ORIGIN OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations is an achievement quite novel in the history of man. But it is based upon ideals toward which generations of men have been inexorably moving. The League was the first effective move in the direction of organizing a world-wide political and social order, in which the common interests of humanity could be seen and served across the barriers of national tradition, racial difference, or geographical separation.

Before the League, it was held both in theory and practice that every State was the sole and sovereign judge of its own acts, owing no allegiance to any higher authority, entitled to resent criticism or even questioning by other States. Such conceptions have disappeared for ever: it is not doubted, and can never again be doubted, that the community of nations has the moral and legal right to discuss and judge the international conduct of each of its members. The belief that aggressive war is a crime against humanity and that it is the interest, the right, and the duty of every State to join in preventing it, is now everywhere taken for granted.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> F.P. Walters, A History of the League of Nations. (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), Walters was formerly Deputy Secretary-General of the League. Vol. 1, P. 1.

So uncompromising a statement may be open to an unending barrage of criticism and rebuttal, but it is upon such a premise that the League was founded.<sup>19</sup> Implicit in this concept that every State has both the right and duty to join in keeping the peace among the world community of nations is the principle of universality of membership in such international organization as may be established for that purpose.<sup>20</sup> Along with this would go a necessary retreat from the position held by most states regarding their status of sovereignty.<sup>21</sup>

What then is this sovereignty which must be abandoned? It is the absurd claim of a State to a right to denounce at any time by its own unilateral action any obligation previously and willingly assumed. This concept of sovereignty demands that nations live in the jungle where only unrestrained physical power is the arbiter of international relations. It is the epitome of secularised diplomacy and of statecraft divorced from morality. It is the philosophy of state absolutism. It contends that there can be no superior to the State: no moral law to observe, no obligation to other States to observe, no international law to respect, no higher authority to acknowledge. It demands international chaos where might

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<sup>19</sup> Grotius Society, "Problems of the War." See address delivered by Lord Parmoor in Gray's Inn Hall on April 10th, 1918, Vol. IV., 1919, p. XVII.

<sup>20</sup> Bolz, "Universality-Aim of the United Nations"-  
German Foreign Policy, Vol. I, 1965.

<sup>21</sup> While it is true, in spite of this strong statement regarding the degree of sovereignty subscribed to by the nations of the world, that they also, for the most part, accept the principle: pacta sunt servanda, the fact remains that this is simply not enough to provide the basis for meaningful relationships within an international organization.

alone remains the only respected referee of disputes. During the past three centuries these claims of exaggerated sovereignty have been praised and practiced by the modern State, and the result has been international chaos.<sup>22</sup>

In practice, contrary to its espoused theoretical foundations, the League did not operate on the basis of universality of membership, nor did it demand any fundamental change in the attitude of states toward the concepts of sovereignty they so jealously cherished.

Regarding its membership, the League proceeded on the assumption that a new member had to be an asset to the organization, not a liability. A member must facilitate and not obstruct the cause of peace and security.<sup>23</sup> Just which nations were in the habit of doing this was determined by definition of the League founders, and later the League members. The original members of the League designated those nations eligible for membership which had carried the war against Germany. Peace-loving nations are not those which refrain from armed conflicts, but rather those which fight on the right side, which seems most often to be determined by who is the victor. The result

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<sup>22</sup>Lucey, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>23</sup>Rudzinski, Aleksander W., "Admission of New Members: The United Nations and the League of Nations." (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1952).

See also Appendix C for formalized Questions submitted by League committee to State applying for Admission.

resembles more a factional alliance than a world organization.<sup>24</sup>

As the first assembly of the League, the Argentinian delegation proposed an amendment regarding membership (in that organization) "That all sovereign States recognised by the community of nations be admitted to join the League of Nations in such a manner that if they do not become members of the League this can only be the result of a voluntary decision on their part."<sup>25</sup> This proposal was rejected as scarcely compatible with the actual conditions of the world. The assembly voted twenty-nine to five against the amendment. Uruguay's proposition that membership ought to be compulsory for all nations, and that there should be no provision for expulsion, let alone withdrawal, amounted to little more than the statement of an ideal.

In the course of its existence, admission to the League constituted an act of true political statesmanship. In spite of this, at one period or another, every recognized state but one was a member of the League of Nations.<sup>26</sup> The exception was

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<sup>24</sup>Ernst Jäckh, and Wolfgang Schwarz, Die Politik Deutschlands in Völkerbund (Geneve: Librairie Kundig, 1932) p.9.

<sup>25</sup>League of Nations, Official Journal, Records of the First Assembly, Meetings of Committees, Vol. II, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 3.

ironic and fatal. The United States of America was perhaps the most significant driving force in the establishment of the League. Beyond this, she enjoyed a special position because of her new and immense strength, and her history of non-involvement in European affairs (her great wealth and fresh approach were also sorely needed). Indeed, the remark was made that England and France "gave" the League to Wilson as a gesture for the part played by the United States in the war.<sup>27</sup> The picture is that the League was the result merely of the gratuitous fulfilment of a whim. But the League's ancestry was of sounder stock than whimsey.

The true ancestors of the League of Nations were religious pacifism and international law.<sup>28</sup> Though both tended toward the same ends they were by no means identical. Indeed, adherents of one approach very often excoriated advocates of the other. Pacifists, even to this day, are looked upon with suspicion and misgivings.<sup>29</sup> There are several quite understandable reasons for this. The pacifist, pursued to extremity, must be considered a traitor. In the limited understanding of man he offends nature. For his behavior is so far beyond that

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<sup>27</sup>Ludwig Dehio. "Deutschland und die Weltpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert", (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1955), p. 121

<sup>28</sup>Walter, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

of most men that it must be abnormal. It is a difference of kind, not simply of degree.<sup>30</sup> The pacifist is prepared to forsake all, even life, for the sake of an ideal. He has conquered fear to such degree that the fundamental rule of nature, self-preservation, is no longer operative. There is nothing more awesome or frightening than a truly fearless man. The saints were of this sort, which is why they are loved only by posterity. His neighbor's cry is: "Go, be a saint on your own time." One is reminded of the chapter in Doestoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov: "The Grand Inquisitor,"<sup>31</sup> in which Christ is accused of having alienated man rather than attracted him by the nature of his example. If he had been merely super-human, if he had behaved as a king of kings or mightiest of the mighty, men would have understood, and idolized him for all time. But he was too subtle, and so demanded more than men could give.

Rulers of nations must deal with great multitudes of people. They can not embrace as practical policies which presume the highest order of behavior and discipline on the

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<sup>30</sup>Gordon Zahn discusses this factor in two of his works: German Catholics and Hitler's Wars (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962) and In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jaegerstaetter (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964).

<sup>31</sup>See: Feodor Doestoevsky - The Brothers Karamazov- A New translation by David Magashack, Vol. I, Penguin Classics, L79 (1958) p. 288.



part of their subjects. Whether or not they abdicate their responsibilities by seeking the lowest common denominator, they must act in accord with what they conceive to be the possible for any particular moment in time. "Politics," (according to one definition) "is the art of the possible."<sup>32</sup> The schemes for peace proffered by pacifists have been considered by most politicians to be simply unrealistic.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the rule of law among nations has been considered equally impractical.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, nations have been exceedingly reluctant to bind themselves to compulsory arbitration in any but the very slightest matters, and even then with certain reservations.<sup>35</sup> Thus

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<sup>32</sup>Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, as President of the Weimar Republic, was embarrassingly outspoken in this regard.

<sup>33</sup>This was true as well among those who believed in a world order of peace through law. Charles de Visscher reiterates this in: *Theories et Realitessen Droit International Public*. This position was taken by several speakers before the Grotius Society. Transactions of the Grotius Society, Vol. II, 1917; Vol. VII, 1922; Vol. X, 1925.

<sup>34</sup>The main reason for this, in the minds of those who otherwise would accept the efficacy of legal settlement, is the absence of sanctions, or more specifically, force.

<sup>35</sup>The Hague conferences in 1899 and 1907 give ample evidence of the positions of the various states in this regard. Any account of the conferences will disclose the dearth of progress in the direction of compulsory arbitration. Among others see: Schuckings work; *The Hague Conferences*. It is only fair to say, however, that the conferences were called to deal with disarmament, not the question of arbitration.

the advocates of peace through international law, while in much better position than the pacifists, have had little success in convincing governments to keep the peace through juridical means. Still, they have enjoyed greater respect and serious consideration not least because, on the whole, they represented a more distinguished group of individuals. The world's foremost legal minds, its most renowned jurists, concerned themselves with international law. Legal means for settling disputes among nations formed a large part of the work of Hugo Grotius, the father of international law. Legal principles enjoy great esteem among all classes of people and what is perhaps even more important, they are understandable. This is not to say that every layman can dispute with a scholar in the area of jurisprudence, but rather that the law as a means of social control is accepted as in accord with man's nature. It does not offend any of his primordial urges. The educated and the illiterate, the rich and the poor alike agree to the settlement of differences by reference to judicial counsel.<sup>36</sup> Of course, it may be demonstrated that the poor conceive that in its workings, the law militates against them. What they would

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<sup>36</sup>In some societies, and in some classes within certain societies, the underprivileged view the law and its enforcers as enemies. But in its broadest sense which would include Comrades Courts in the Soviet Union, it is the most widely accepted formalized means of settling differences.

change is the agents of the law, not the law itself. But even though it may stand often as an enemy, it is not an unnatural enemy. The law does not insist that its advocates stand apart from the rest of society. One may question its efficacy but not its propriety. There was then far more likelihood of progress in this area as a means for avoiding future wars than in congresses of pacifists.

All the same, over the years, a great deal of work was done by pacifists as well as by international lawyers. That there was considerable accomplished in this direction is demonstrated by the fact that the first draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations was drawn up in the course of several weeks' intensive work.<sup>37</sup> This would have been unthinkable without immense prior preparation.

Walters, in his book on the League, divides its pre-history into three periods.<sup>38</sup> The first period comprised at least three centuries and covered the dissolution of the unified structure of medieval Europe epitomized by the Holy Roman Empire,

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<sup>37</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

into dependent national states, down to the Napoleonic wars. During that period several schemes for the prevention of war between the princes of Europe were published by scholarly thinkers. Among these were the writings of Sully, Emeric Cruce, William Penn, Abbe'de St Pierre, Rousseau, Bentham, and Kant.<sup>39</sup> It is noted that these great men were not primarily known for their peace plans. Walters calls them "literary curiosities." The true forces which would one day in the distant future impel men to form a binding league were those touched upon above, pacifism and international law. The pacifism referred to in this instance is religious pacifism.

Non-resistance to violence has not been the official doctrine of the Christian Church since the time of Constantine. But many individuals and groups professed it and were prepared to suffer any consequences for their advocacy. The influence of these pacifists was far greater than their number. The

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Hemleben's book, *Plans for World Peace through Six Centuries* covers all these schemes in detail. They are also recounted in the Darby paper presented before the Grotius Society in which he admonishes other writers on the subject for omitting the now highly regarded plan of George of Podebrad, King of Bohemia.

W. Evans Darby, "Some European Leagues of Peace" Transactions of Grotius Society, IV, 1919, pp. 169-198.

Society of Friends<sup>40</sup> particularly has played a continuingly important role inspiring other nonconformist churches and earning respect for their beliefs. Of course, pacifism of any sort runs counter to interests of governments, for it is a policy which would end the independence of any states practising it in a world of multiple nationalistic states. The sentiment remains attractive and powerfully moving to many.<sup>41</sup>

International law, to those of a more rational approach to the solution of problems, and certainly more academically oriented, does not excite the same degree of passion or devoted advocacy. This does not mean that there have not been many important proponents of this means for the settlement of international disputes. On the contrary, a great deal has been written in this area and many conferences held. The problem is that the students of international law are better aware of the significance of certain terms which describe the situation in which the nations of the world find themselves. The concept of sovereignty which they all claim is anarchic, insists that states may do whatever they like so long as they are not bound by treaty.<sup>42</sup> Thus war is outside the cognizance

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<sup>40</sup> Also known as the Quakers.

<sup>41</sup> Zahn, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Lucey, op. cit., p. 14.

of international law. Sovereignty, as was mentioned earlier, is an insurmountable obstacle to the building of foundations for peace, either within the realm of international law, or in the presence of ardent pacifism. "Nevertheless, international law is the direct ancestor of the Covenant."<sup>43</sup> In its earlier years, a great deal of effort was expended by international lawyers in determining when a war was just or unjust. It was generally conceded that war could be both just and lawful. But Grotius himself protested against the notion that a nation could go to war whenever it chose. Later teachers of international law abandoned, in the face of extreme sovereignty, the distinction between just and unjust wars. Still, the continuing development within the field of international law formed the foundation stones with which the edifice of the League was built. The mortar which would hold those stones together was a different question, one destined to remain unanswered even to this day. Whatever may be made of the tracings of the development of the idea of keeping the peace among nations, they were extremely faint and weak. As a practical matter to world statesmen, they were nonexistent.

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<sup>43</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 5.

The second period described by Walters encompasses the interval from the close of the Napoleonic wars to the First World War.<sup>44</sup> Anti-war feeling began to show itself in the realm of practical politics. The more entrenched forces of nationalism held unremitting sway, but they no longer did so without challenge.<sup>45</sup> Governments were forced to consider the growing voice which demanded they look toward some more peaceful means to settle disputes. The calculated use of war as an instrument of national policy could no longer be pursued as by Bismarck, however successful he may have been, without regard to public and world opinion. There were four distinct lines of development in the League idea at this time.<sup>46</sup> Increasing internationalism, that is, interdependence in all spheres of activity, and broader and more frequent communication. It was becoming more and more evident that there were interests common to all. Consultation and the perception of mutual interests became almost institutionalized into what is termed the "Concert of Europe."<sup>47</sup> This approach

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Barbara Tuchman, The Proud Tower (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), pp. 407-462.

<sup>46</sup> Walters, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> An interesting account of this informal, intricate arrangement for coordinating the foreign policies of the European nations was written by Alfred Zimmern.

The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, 1918-1933. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1939), pp. 65-86.

to the ordering of the world community of nations perdures to this day, and has strongly influenced the foreign policy formation of the several European nations, particularly England and France, for generations. The third and fourth lines of growth through this period were the continuation of the development of international law and pacifism.

Tremendous changes in the nineteenth century had profound and inevitable effects upon the relations between nations. Industrialization, modernization, population growth, economic growth, increased trade, growing specialization, were but a few of the factors which had their impact on the conduct of government. New means of communication now included the steamship, the railway, and the telegraph. They can not be underestimated as instruments of change. The factor of raw materials, natural resources, took on new meaning. If order were not infused into the increasingly complicated and interdependent situation, chaos would be inevitable. The solution to some of the emerging problems was the institution of various specialized international agencies.<sup>48</sup> Some of these had a degree of control over

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<sup>48</sup> Following is a list of the international agencies (unions) which were established prior to the outbreak of World War I.:

- 1868. International Telegraph Union.
- 1874. Universal Postal Union.
- 1875. International Office for Weights and Measures.
- 1883. International Union for the protection of industrial property.
- 1886. International Union for the protection of works of literature and art.



over the national administrations of the countries involved. The Universal Postal Union was the most complete and successful of this genre. There was good reason for this. It was in the best interest of each nation to cooperate with and abide by the regulations of the union. Not every nation fully understood this to begin with, but the vast majority did, and those who did not came quickly to appreciate the need for and value of cooperation in the fullest. The first of these agencies was the Danube Commission, established in 1856, after which the number proliferated, though without gaining any political influence. In the area of operation of these organs, participating nations did have to limit their own freedom of action, but this did not seem to erode the uncompromising nature of the sovereignty to which they subscribed. Attempts to subject more politically volatile questions to international control were summarily dismissed or thwarted. Restricted as were these incipient forms of international organization, they constituted

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- 1889. Pan-American Union (orig. American International Bureau.)
  - 1890. Anti-slavery Conference at Brussels.
  - 1890. International Union for the publication of Customs tariffs.
  - 1890. Central Office for the regulation of international transport.
  - 1902. Sugar Convention at Brussels
  - 1907. International Agricultural Institute.
  - 1907. International Office of Health.

no more than symbols of what pacifists wished to implement on a broader and deeper scale. There were innumerable other international societies formed outside the field of official government activity which bore witness to the common nature and interests of mankind, but they served not a whit in preventing future wars.<sup>49</sup> To be sure, most of these international groups made no attempt whatever to influence or to become involved in or even to comment upon international diplomacy. The socialist International was an exception to this pattern, but while it disavowed war and armaments, there was such disagreement among the heterogeneous membership it was impossible to secure a comprehensive and meaningful formal resolution in this regard.<sup>50</sup>

What remained the most powerful force on the international scene was the amorphous "Concert of Europe." Although Great Britain attempted diligently to make of it a more efficient and reliable instrument for maintaining order among the European nations, she was not able to call together the nations involved in this group immediately prior to World War I. Thus, after establishing a notable record of achieve-

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<sup>49</sup> There were "Leagues for Peace" established in virtually every country, including Germany.

<sup>50</sup> Tuchman, op. cit., p. 456.

ments with regard to the settlement of problems among the European states, such as the colonial problem in Africa, the Concert failed utterly when it was most needed.

Perhaps the most encouraging developments in the field of international order came in the area of arbitration.<sup>51</sup> Once a dispute had been put to arbitration, the results were usually quite satisfactory both as to the arbitrament, and the manner in which it was carried out by the nations involved. The real problem lay in determining which disputes should be settled by arbitration, who should act as arbitrator, and what the basis for decision should be. Even more difficult than this was overcoming the extreme reluctance on the part of states to bind themselves in advance to submit certain categories of disputes to judicial settlement. Those interested in progress along this line worked to establish a permanent international court and to hasten the codification of international law. Several nations made resolutions in favor of the principle of arbitration but these failed inevitably to

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<sup>51</sup> Although the Hague conferences failed to make arbitration compulsory, and only succeeded in eliciting the wish that it be considered. Nonetheless, the number of cases put to arbitration rose rapidly, and steps were taken in the direction of establishing, if not a permanent Court, experienced pool of judges for hearing cases brought for arbitration. Zimmern, op. cit., p. 108.

be ratified.<sup>52</sup> The only positive results that accrued from the Hague Conferences were in this area of arbitration of disputes, but they were desultory at best and so proved disappointing to all those who wished to see peace-keeping apparatus strengthened.

Agitation for the abolition of war continued apace. Societies for peace were founded in several countries in the first half of the nineteenth century. By mid-century a series of international congresses were held. Pacifists were still no more highly regarded then they were previously, but they were making more noise. They were even finding spokesmen among the more radical members of some European parliaments, though it must be said that these advocates used the more practical arguments of the high costs of armaments and the wastefulness of war rather than the condemnation of fighting under in any circumstances.<sup>53</sup> Even so, all proponents of non-violent methods for maintaining peace were lumped together as either impractical idealists or traitors. Given the fact of heavily armed states with differing interests and contiguous borders, it was unthinkable to foreswear the use of arms for self-protection, and unpatriotic merely to suggest such a

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<sup>52</sup> Strausz-Hupe and Possony, International Relations, (New York: 1950), p. 822.

<sup>53</sup> At the Mannheim Congress in 1906 a general strike (an increasingly popular means of protest) was proposed in the event of war. See: Carl E. Schorske, German Social Democracy, 1905-1917, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 56.

possibility. Those who subscribed to such beliefs were subjected to the most excoriating criticism. Antipathy to pacifism was so emotionally based as to preclude rational evaluation of those schemes which were realistically thought out and which took into consideration all the relevant factors impinging upon a given situation. Thus even those approaches which were quite in accord with "realpolitik" were spurned as ridiculous. Indeed, even after the League was put into operation and counted among its members the majority of states upon the earth, those who believed too strongly in the efficacy of that body as the instrument for preventing all future wars were eyed, if not suspiciously, at least with a certain degree of condescension. That any international organization could by itself keep the peace among sovereign nations was still considered an impractical ideal.<sup>54</sup>

The first opportunity tangible for the demonstration of how much progress toward institutionalizing means for insuring peace had been achieved came with the convocation of the Hague Conference of 1899. The invitation and idea for this conference came from what most nations considered a highly unlikely source, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. All those nations having diplomatic

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<sup>54</sup>Charles de Visscher, Theories et Realities en Droit International Public, (Paris, 1953), p. 81.

representatives in St. Petersburg were invited for a two-fold purpose: to insure peace and to limit the arms race. It is now felt that the Tsar's motivation for the conference was fear of the new developments in armament of his neighboring states to the west. Russia did not have the money at the time to devote to keeping up arms procurement.<sup>55</sup> Whatever the case, diplomatists of the period were skeptical of any meaningful results, and did not even want the question of limitation of armaments brought up, let alone acted upon. Germany particularly was opposed to this question, and her highest ranking military officers and even members of the government spoke out vehemently against the idea. The Prussian spirit and influence manifested itself with increasing strength and abandon. Germany was not the only opposing voice in the armaments question merely the strongest and most uncompromising.<sup>56</sup> The result of all the discussion relating to this problem were that the military representatives of the nations involved in finding solutions found instead more reasons why it was impossible even to breach

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<sup>55</sup>"The offer had not been quite altruistic: Russia had fallen behind in military technology and was temporarily unable to finance the reequipping of her army. Hence disarmament would have served her strategic interests best." Strausz-Hupe and Possony, International Relations, p. 571.

<sup>56</sup>France, because of her fear of Germany, did not want Russia, her ally at the time, to disarm. Her opposition to disarmament was silent, but effective all the same in collaborating its failure.

the subject. In the face of the great enthusiasm registered by many at the prospect of this great peace conference, its utter failure as regards the armaments question was a bitter disappointment. Much more serious work was devoted to the study of plans for the settlement of disputes by arbitration or the mediation of disinterested powers. Detailed projects were submitted by already existing peace organizations such as the International Law Association. The fruit of this labor was the drafting of the "Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes." All the invited states were signatories, and the diplomatists considered the document extremely advanced. It provided for third-party mediation "so far as circumstances allow," and for the appointment of an international commission of inquiry to ascertain the facts of a given situation.<sup>57</sup> But, as was indicated above, any attempt to make

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- <sup>57</sup> The ultimate agreement arrived at by the signatory powers at the Hague Conferences may be summarized as follows:
1. The signatory Powers shall use their best efforts to ensure the pacific settlement of international difficulties.
  2. In case of serious disagreement, diplomacy having failed, the disagreeing Powers shall have recourse, as far as circumstances allow, to the good offices or mediation of one or more friendly Powers.
  3. In such circumstances an offer of mediation by third Powers, strangers to the dispute, shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act.
  4. In disputes of an international nature, which involve neither national honor nor vital interests, and which arise from difference of opinion on points of fact, the signatory Powers shall have recourse to an international commission of inquiry.

arbitration of disputes binding in advance on ratifying states was abortive. Most states were prepared to subscribe to binding arbitration of disputes on carefully proscribed categories. However, unimportant the categories for arbitration, Germany would not agree to limit her freedom of action in the slightest degree. Reports of the proceedings indicate that Germany's unflagging opposition to any obligation whatever for arbitration contributed largely to the failure of the conference on this head.<sup>58</sup> All that could finally be accomplished, and this was not to be wholly discounted, was the endorsement of arbitration as the most desirable method for settling the legality of disputes and interpreting treaties. A more positive note was established by the creation of the "Permanent Court of Arbitration." While this was neither a court, nor permanent, it did constitute usable machinery for facilitating the employment of arbitration in the settlement of a number of problems over the years following. Before the ending the Conference, provision was made for the convocation of the next Conference.

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5. In questions of a legal nature, and especially in the interpretation or application of international conventions, arbitration shall be recognized as the most effective, and at the same time the most equitable, means of settling disputes which diplomacy has failed to adjust.

58. Scott, op. cit., p. vi.



Eight volatile years later, the Tsar again called together the nations of the world for the second Peace Conference at the Hague. With the experience of the first Conference to draw upon, participants started well in advance to determine ways to avoid the most vital questions for which they were meeting to find solutions. The question of armaments was to be scrupulously avoided.<sup>59</sup> Lovers of peace who looked with such hope to this new Conference would have been outraged if they knew how completely the topic was to be avoided. There would not even be a chance to fail. The British government was aware of the intense interest of a large and growing number individuals who demanded that something be done about the arms race, and the larger question of peace. In a few years the voice of peace was suddenly strong enough to be heard, and if not obeyed, at least answered. The representative from Britain was as reluctant to mention armaments and their limitation as any of the delegates to the Conference. But the government at home would have to answer for his failure to do so. Great Britain was not alone in its concern to avoid mentioning one of the two avowed purposes for the Conference in the first place. Only the Germans were outspoken in their denial of the merits of the question. When, at last, the

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<sup>59</sup>They were to be considered in the next conference.  
Ibid., p. 29.

British offered the resolution that the expenditures for armaments among the nations attendant be seriously examined, it was quickly adopted and pursued no further.<sup>60</sup> A great sigh of relief seemed to greet this deus ex machina. The question was raised and disposed of in short and painless order. That the resolution meant nothing at all did not disturb the participants in the least; it rather comforted them and allowed them to get on with the much more familiar task of devising rules for war.

The Germans stood again unalterably opposed to any proposals with regard to arbitration or the establishment of a Permanent Court. All that was achieved was an addendum to the statement of the Conference of 1899 which stated the desirability of the use of arbitration settling disputes of certain kinds. The addendum reiterated the desirability of states having recourse to arbitration in so far as circumstances would permit.<sup>61</sup> Such a statement only underscored the failure of the Conference to accomplish very much in the way of machinery to maintain peace among nations. Those states which attended the Conference did act as an international body, however to meet again in eight years' time. Unfortunately, the

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<sup>60</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>61</sup>Scott, op. cit., p. 55. Specifically, Article 38 of the Hague Convention of 1907.

First World War, which they had met to preclude, intervened.

It is the time from the outbreak of the war to the Conference of Paris that is included in the third period of prehistory of the League. The progress made during the hundred years preceding World War I was considerable. Many agencies, both public and private, had been established. Arbitration was becoming better known, and resorted to with greater frequency.<sup>62</sup> Forums for international discussion and participation were becoming institutionalized. Custom was being created. The view is an impressive one, taken in isolation. But when what needed doing is measured against what was accomplished, the results are quite different. An increasingly complex and divided world seemed to be moving toward its own destruction and the machinery to stop the process of maddened disintegration simply was not available.<sup>63</sup> In that sense, all the hundred years' development was as nothing compared to progress in other areas. These included the political institutions within the nation which itself was changing in a changing world. Not so the diplomatists either in thought or deed. Their approach to

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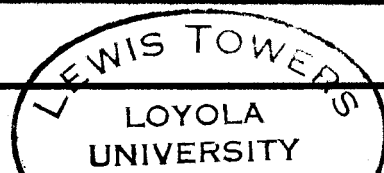
<sup>62</sup> Zimmern, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>63</sup> The only "machinery" which would concern itself with a problem of this scope was non-institutionalized and had no mechanism for calling together its "members," if indeed such a convocation would have proved successful in the first place.

the solution of international problems had not kept pace with developments in virtually all other fields of endeavor. The unrelievable and total disaster of World War I confronted the rulers and the peoples of the world with the compelling need, recognized in conscience, to reconstruct the institutional methods for resolving conflicts among nations. This did not happen with the firing of the first shot. Initially there was great patriotic fervor and militaristic spirit. But as the war continued and grew more horrible, touching the life of every person, the sentiment that such awful destruction should be prevented from ever recurring became the mode of thought. Great energy then was expended in devising plans for peace. Numerous societies for this purpose sprang up.<sup>64</sup> But, while there was time to draw up plans for peace, most of the people, and especially their rulers, grasped only superficially what they were about. There was not the time for this new philosophy to seep into the marrow of the bones of its adherents. So it was possible to produce the Covenant of the League neatly on paper, but not to nurture the principles upon which it was founded and make them operative, either as regards governments or citizens. Any public espousal of peace organizations was proscribed and punished in Germany, and her near

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<sup>64</sup> Hermann Heinrich Grauert, Zur Geschichte des Weltfriedens, des Völkerrechts und der Idee einer Liga der Nationen. (Munich, 1920).



neighbors remained silent out of fear. But even the government in Great Britain spoke of the desirability of such an organization, and gave encouragement to the private League societies.<sup>65</sup>

The most favorable climate for the growth and proliferation of such groups was in the United States where former president Taft founded the "League to Enforce Peace."<sup>66</sup> Both political parties in the United States endorsed the League idea, but Democratic president Woodrow Wilson, through his high office and powerful advocacy, assumed the position of world spokesman for the implementation of this new international order. The position of the United States was quite favorable for the role of chief advocate of the League. America had no history of entanglement in European affairs and so was largely free from the suspicion that inevitably met the proponent of any scheme that had to do with the ordering of relations between the nations of Europe. Furthermore, she had great wealth and power, extremely important attributes for demanding respect among sovereign states.

The longer the war lasted, the more disposed were the people, the armies, and their leaders, to wish for a peace which was more than a cessation in fighting. The governments of the United States and Great Britain assured the people that

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<sup>65</sup> Lord Parmoor address at Grotius Society, "The League of Nations", Transactions of the Grotius Society, IV, 1919, p.XX.

<sup>66</sup> Walters, op. cit., p. 18.

what they were fighting for was a new international order which would diminish the possibilities of future wars, and lessen the burden of armaments. The League, per se, had become one of the war aims.

In the course of the war, a multitude of plans were drawn up ranging from the merest outline to the most elaborate and detailed plans for a world federation comprising and international parliament.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

### III. THE QUESTION OF GERMAN MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE

We must then examine those factors which finally motivated the rulers of Germany to bring that nation into the League. Two things were involved: the decision that such a step should be taken, and maneuvering which effected the transaction. The first is speculation; the second, history.

Gustave Stresemann is generally considered to be the architect of Germany's entrance into the League of Nations.<sup>68</sup> The political history to which he was witness and principal actor was chaotic in the extreme. Not a voice has been raised nor a word written which gainsays his abilities as politician and statesman. Beyond this, every manner of encomium has been heaped upon him by his many biographers and commentators. There is, nonetheless, one stray voice of opprobrium,<sup>69</sup> which should, at least, give us pause in our appreciation of him as a man, and in our evaluation of his work. Germany's membership in the

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<sup>68</sup> Erich Eyck, Geschichte der Weimarer Republic.  
(Zurich: Vol. I, 1956, Vol. II, 1957) Vol. II, p. 49.

<sup>69</sup> Hans W. Gatzke, Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany, (Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), p. 35.

See also Godfrey Scheele, The Weimar Republic,  
(London, 1946), p. 232.

League was anticipated from the beginning.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, much of the thought which provides the background for the League idea derives from German citizens, particularly its jurists.<sup>71</sup> There were Leagues for peace organized in Germany as well as in other countries of the world, and Germany's participation in the Hague Conferences and the Paris Conference bears testimony to the existence of the idea. Beyond this, any organization which intended to be more than an alliance, or at least pretended to be more, could not possibly exclude the geographical heart of Europe. The Concert of Europe would have been cacophonous indeed if Germany were not one of the players.

But the League as an ideal and the League in reality were quite different matters. However much discussion might devolve about an international or even supranational organization, no statesman conceived of it beyond the abstract. For one thing, few people, outside some of the rulers of Germany, believed there was about to be a great war or at least war, was imminent and at that moment inevitable. The Germans moved

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<sup>70</sup> Before the war was ended and the Treaty of Versailles drawn up, those nations occupied in developing plans for a League of Nations worked on the assumption that Germany would hold membership by virtue of her position among Western nations. France and England both held this attitude.

<sup>71</sup> Veit Valentin, Geschichte des Völkerbundgedankens in Deutschland, (Berlin: H.R. Engelman, 1936.)



inexorably in that direction, but they were alone in so doing.<sup>72</sup> That is not to say that other nations did not contribute to the ultimate outbreak of hostilities, but only to indicate that in no other country were there leaders oriented in the way the German militarists were.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps every nation has its hawks, its glorifiers of war, its frustrated heroes; but rarely are there to be found responsible men of high positions who express themselves as did many of the more highly placed military and civilian German leaders.<sup>74</sup> Thus the men who guided Germany's destiny were in no way ready to consign their task to an assemblage of other nations. War was neither unnatural nor immoral. It might even be the highest good. What was unnatural was for a sovereign nation to give into other hands decisions as to when, where, and if it should fight.

Again the question: how did Germany find its way into the League?

The culture that was developing in Germany around the close of the nineteenth century and which "matured" extra-

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<sup>72</sup> Bernhardt-Foerster both agree on this point.  
 Bernhardt, op. cit., p. 11.  
 Foerster, op. cit., pp. 4-7.

<sup>73</sup> Foerster is particularly insistent on this point and concerned lest it be forgotten or minimized. op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> So outspokenly aggressive were some of the German leaders such as Hindenburg and von Seeckt that they did much damage to the diplomatic position of their foreign minister.

ordinarily rapidly in the beginning of the twentieth century gave rise to a megalomania which pervaded the entire nation: the mystical notion of "Volk."<sup>75</sup> This was more than nationalism; it went beyond pure racism, although these two elements were boldly manifest. It was a belief in some vaguely defined destiny: Germany was to be the leading nation of Europe, and as such, of all mankind.<sup>76</sup> This position was hers as of right. The German people were in every way superior. It is amazing how tolerant one can be of another's opinion, however extreme, if it happens to be particularly flattering. Of course, there were other powerful currents running through German society at the same time, all of which had their effect on shaping the nature and direction of her history.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Fritz Stern. Politics of Cultural Despair, Doubleday Anchor Book, (New York: Garden City, 1965).

<sup>76</sup>W. Evans Darby, in a paper read before the Grotius Society on November 28, 1916, recounted an interview conducted by an American journalist, Mr. Swope, in which a widely known German professor, Stengel, was asked: "whether he believed the Empire (Germany) would participate in future international conferences as the Hague." He gave "no" as his answer, and said "that such Conferences would be unnecessary under a German peace," which he defined as a sort of super-State, in which the Germans would enforce order in the World. "That one condition of prosperous existence, especially for the neutrals," he said, "is submission to our supreme direction. Under our overlordship all international law would become superfluous, for we, of ourselves, would instinctively give to each one his rights."

Grotius Society Transactions, Vol. II. 1917, p. 146.

<sup>77</sup>Hans Kohn, The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960) pp. 3-21 and 262-305.

The shocking provisions of the Versailles Treaty provoked a defensive reaction on the part of Germans which militated against their ever learning anything about what sort of philosophy possessed their souls. It also put them in a humiliating position in relation to other nations. They conceived themselves to be one of the great powers (if not the greatest). It was intolerable that they should be watched by teams of foreign inspectors to ensure against their recovering themselves. It was beyond bearing that foreign troops should be occupying their sovereign territory, and that they could not fortify their own frontiers. A great power at the mercy of every neighbor was unthinkable. Yet the situation persisted. All the other great European nations duly held their places on the Council of the League of Nations. It was the thing, the place to be at the moment. The world took the League quite seriously for the most part. Not so the international politicians.<sup>78</sup> But it was not good form to express one's cynicism in public, nor was it particularly prudent. There might even have been a glimmer of belief in this new method of conducting international relations. Perhaps there was even a glimmer of hope, but it was faint. No country was more skeptical than Germany. But membership in the League was desirable from many other points of view than that it was a means of keeping the peace.

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<sup>78</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 28.

It is ironical that membership in the League could provide Germany with the opportunity to reconstruct herself as a formidable military power.<sup>79</sup> She could argue that membership was impossible so long as she could not fulfill one obligation of membership; namely, the article calling for the collective use of arms and men against any peace-breaking nation.<sup>80</sup> She could not pledge what she did not have. More immediately important, the substitution of a League team to inspect the state of Germany's compliance with the terms of her disarmament enabled Germany to rid herself of the painful scrutiny of the previously ubiquitous Allied inspection teams. An additional proviso gave Germany the right to determine the particulars as to time and place of the League inspection. Still further, Germany could more strenuously demand the de-occupation of the Rhine by French troops. Apart from any

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<sup>79</sup> Gatzke, in a bibliographical note, explains the paucity of written references to German rearmament by civilian and military German leaders. "There was the constant fear on the part of everyone involved, that news of the Reichswehr's secret operations might leak out. And as Severing once put it: "If one writes it down, it is as good as betrayed." Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany, Baltimore: 1954, p.120. The increase in armaments can be illustrated by the rising defense budget. Military expenditures went from 476 million marks in 1925 to 504 million in 1925, and 553 million in 1927. And this was not the entire amount, for clandestine military payments totaled between 5.5 and 6 million marks.

Eyck, op. cit., pp. 143-149.

<sup>80</sup> Article 16, Covenant of the League of Nations. See Appendix.

interest whatever in the ideals of the League, it was all to Germany's advantage to become a member of that international organization. On the part of existing members of such an organization, there usually is the feeling that an ever ready conference table is a vitally important thing, and that a continuing dialogue will forestall resort to arms. To achieve this, the members of the organization are quite willing to admit to membership states which otherwise do not fulfill the stated requirements. Since it would not be considered "fair play" to behave with suspicion toward a sovereign equal, it is more difficult to keep a member nation under surveillance than a non-member. Schemes for disarmament generally fail because of the extreme reluctance of nations to allow any meaningful form of on-site inspection. The only successful venture in this area was feasible by its peculiar nature and limited scope. Major ships are not easily hidden, either in the construction state or afloat. It is not very difficult to measure the tonnage of a nation's warships, particularly when all harbors are open to commercial traffic. Whether or not a shipyard can potentially construct a battleship, it cannot do so in some secret shed. Nor can it be accomplished in a week. Long before it becomes a fact, the fact of its building is obvious to all.

Two approaches to avoiding war in the settling of international disputes have generally been taken: arbitration and discussion. This, of course, excludes the device of collective security which is finally the method of peacekeeping "resorted to" by the League and the United Nations. Collective repulsion of aggression is obviously resort to arms, hardly a peaceful settlement of a dispute. This, of course, is the last resort after the above named approaches have failed to provide a solution. Of the two, the latter, discussion, is much preferred by most nations. Arbitration, unfortunately, requires at one point or another that a nation promise to abide by the finding of some extraneous power. There is no recourse--it is the surrender of some degree of sovereignty. This is intolerable. When one goes beyond this to the question of compulsory arbitration wherein a nation binds itself in advance to the resolution of certain disputes by a third-party judgment, the impingement upon sovereignty is simply unthinkable. There remains, of course, the ongoing dialogue, the permanent conference table. It is inconceivable that nations can persist in their mystical belief in the efficacy of this medium for keeping peace when history records so many instances where this provided a convenient diversion for use by states bent upon disturbing deeds. There are instances which may be drawn

from any epoch,<sup>81</sup> but never more than recent times both in and out of the League and United Nations. These range from the episode of the Trojan Horse to that of the emissaries from Japan on the 7th of December 1941. The old diplomatists insisted that such a body as the League Assembly, and even the Council, would have the tendency to destroy all possibility of meaningful dialogue and result rather in a prestigious platform for demagogues. It has not proven all that bad, nor, on the contrary, has much been accomplished on the level of statesmanship. The hope perdures, all the same, that as long as words flow, blood will not.

So it was that Germany had every reason to pursue membership in the League quite apart from any belief in the League's idea or principles. This she did under the guidance of Dr. Stresemann. This is not to say that the nation in its heterogeneity of political parties at the time was of one mind in this regard.<sup>82</sup> The account of the maneuvering that went on within Germany on the one hand, and within the League on the other, is absorbing to say the least. That story shall be reiterated but first there is another factor regarding Germany's desire to enter the League which must be disclosed.

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<sup>81</sup>Countries still seem to be able to talk and shoot at the same time.

<sup>82</sup>Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), Chap. 5, pp. 154-218.

Germany felt herself inordinately humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles in which was incorporated the Covenant of the League. She had suffered immeasurably as a result of the war. Conditions after the war were even worse, if for no other reason than that there was no longer the compelling distraction of the great conflict itself. Now she was being watched like a naughty child. Not being a member of the League, she was excluded from the councils of the "great powers. It is not easy for a nation of people to accept guilt, either as individuals or as a country, for a conflict involving so great a part of the world so deeply. In the end, the citizen must make an act of faith in his leaders or else he can no longer retain his citizenship with its attendant duties. One may disagree on policy, but there must remain an unfailing trust in those who guide the country, not so much that they are following the wisest policy, but that they truly represent the interest of the nation. It is possible then to condemn them for foolish actions, but never for treachery. If that is so, then there can be no question of guilt. A nation does not take up arms at the behest of traitors. An inordinate amount of energy was expended in propagandising the "guilt-lie."<sup>83</sup> It was probably unnecessary for the most part. If indeed Germany was at fault, how could she herself have had to endure such pain? In the

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<sup>83</sup> Erich Eyck, op. cit., p. 96.



course of their suffering, the German people expiated their sins. When, after the war, the hardships and sorrows continued, it was simply too much to insist that they merited even more privations and must at the same time acknowledge the justness of it all.

The school books of a nation understandably lay greatest emphasis upon those events in the world which affect that nation's history. Nations, even as individuals, are egocentric. It is one of the factors which make for survival and there is nothing more basic than preservation of self. In the modern epoch those states have known greatness which have cultivated a broader view of the world, which have developed a sense of proportion. That is not to say, however, that in so doing they have ceased to look upon the world other than with themselves as its center, but rather that the significance of other forces was recognized. The Germans presumed a place among the great nations of the world. Their history books placed them there. They could not long tolerate a lesser role. Spain was once such a power. In four centuries, she has not learned to accept being thought of or treated as less.<sup>84</sup> She has of course

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<sup>84</sup>Walters gives a very moving account of Spain's withdrawal from the League for the reason that she could not give over her place on the Council to Germany and still remain within the organization. His account is sensitive perhaps because he was a part of the working of the League as its Deputy-secretary, op. cit., pp. 388-389.

adjusted her everyday activities to accord with the facts. But her spirit cannot acknowledge it. In the case of Germany, the facts indicated that she belonged among the great powers. Her cross was that the other great powers for the moment refused to allow her her rightful place.<sup>85</sup> They attempted, as it were, to keep her down in spirit as well as body. This would not do at a time when that country was already so distressed in spirit. For this reason alone Germany must enter the League. If the League, as instituted, had been identical with the more advanced concept of what it ought to have been, Germany never would have been admitted. Not that membership was to be so exclusive; on the contrary, it was to be universal in principal. Before it was officially written out of existence, every recognized nation but one was included among its membership.<sup>86</sup> Since the League formed a part of the Versailles Treaty, membership in that organization necessarily implied compliance with the Treaty.<sup>87</sup> Germany never completely fulfilled the

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<sup>85</sup> Greatest opposition to German membership in the League came from France, although, at the very outset of its founding, France indicated, at least officially, that she was amenable to German inclusion as an original member.

<sup>86</sup> Walters, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> This fact was greatly deplored by many commentators on the League. See the paper by Sir Graham Bower, Grotius Society Proceedings, Vol. VII, 1922, p. 93. On the other hand, it has been argued that if the League had not been made a part of the Versailles Treaty, it would never have come into existence.

obligations laid down by the Treaty. She did not, at first, simply ignore the more burdensome or odious provisions, though at one period, it seemed as if hostilities would have to be renewed in order to force her compliance.<sup>88</sup> It was precisely the fact that the only effective means of coercion that could be levelled at Germany was armed force that led the weary world to condone Germany's failure of compliance to the letter. However convincing the excuses she gave for her behavior, if pursued they would have proven inadequate. No one wanted to engage in pursuit. It was far easier for the moment to accept the excuses tendered. It is ever thus: government and business are not in the hands of visionaries. The visionaries are present to provide the ideological apologies but not to determine daily operating policy. The operations are always of a tactical nature, and being so limited, tolerate elements that in the very long analysis may contain the seeds of destruction. Appeasement is as natural to man as walking upright. The greater part of our lives is spent trying to avoid the inevitable. Neither man nor nations have learned to defer pleasure. One does not hear of dictated "five year plans" in free

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<sup>88</sup> When the head of the German delegation to Versailles, Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, then foreign minister, returned to face his government with the shocking terms of the treaty, they absolutely refused to ratify it. The alternative, of course, would have been to renew the fighting until it was accepted, a horrifying prospect to either side.

societies. It is only the forcing of policy to conform with ideology that makes for its employment within totalitarian regimes. And even here every compromise is made. In democratic nations of broad suffrage, those in power must "deliver the goods" or expect to be voted out of office. Even for the highest of causes the people, generally, have a very limited patience. It is not all the fault of the electorate, however. The leaders are also creatures of the same environment which demands immediate satisfactions. Sacrifice in the present for the sake of future gains is for the few highly motivated individuals who can struggle for abstract goals which they are wholly unsure of achieving. The rule of behavior is to temporize: perhaps things will be set aright and then sacrifice will have been unnecessary. If not, then the evils which may come will be met when they are clear and present. The old adage of "a stitch in time" is not convincing enough. It is astounding that so many were so surprised when Hitler actually did what he threatened to do in Mein Kampf. How Nazi Germany became a reality is a fascinating study which in itself tells that story of man.<sup>89</sup> It is relative here insofar as it illustrates how unrepentant and unregenerated Germany was after her defeat in the Great War.<sup>90</sup> She never was ready to accept the

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<sup>89</sup>Fritz Stern's study, "The Politics of Cultural Despair", is devoted to tracing one aspect of this question.

<sup>90</sup>F. W. Foerster: Europe and the German Question, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1949), p. 272.

League idea and everything she did proved it. What amazes is that she was so careless in not hiding her feelings. She did not approach her conquerors with humility or any sign of contrition. When she indicated her own ineligibility for reasons of her not being able to assume her share of those obligations of the League which required the commitment of arms for collective defense, she did so only to open the way to her own rearmament. Whether or not she could live up to the Covenant was a question quite simply never asked. Germany could be quite cavalier about this since she knew well that there could never be a true League of Nations without her. That thought, of course, did not disturb her one whit. Without Germany's membership, the League would be no more than an alliance against Germany. Obviously, it was all to the good of Germany to become a member. She must of necessity be treated as an equal and then the most galling aspect of the League, that it was an alliance of victors, would be done away with. There could be virtually no negative aspects from the German standpoint as far as non-Germans were concerned. But this was not to reckon with the actual situation in Germany, the state of the German mind. Much work has been done to determine just what the German mentality was since it has given rise to the greatest disturbance of the entire first half of the twentieth century.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Hans Kohn; The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 3-21.

It is unfortunate that the attention span of adults, even as of children, is so limited. Thus a question that was never adequately answered is laid to rest when an answer would be most instructive to all mankind. But we concentrate upon those things which immediately impinge upon our lives and will not grant the time and economic resource to what is termed idle speculation. It seems, even as the world grows richer and better able to support ivory towers, that less is spent, both proportionately and actually, in so doing. The German question which perdured through a second World War more terrible than the Great War which gave birth to the League of Nations, was solved for the moment by an accident and little more attention is given to it.<sup>92</sup>

The German need to be recognized by the nations of the world as one of the great powers, and the will to rearm, were two of the strongest forces in determining her foreign policy.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>The allusion here is to the fact that Germany was divided into East and West Germany as a result of the manner in which she was conquered and occupied in World War II. The exact boundaries, according to Cornelius Ryan's book, "The Last Battle," were the result partly of the mislaying of the plan that President Roosevelt endorsed for capturing Berlin, and the deployment of the British and American armies in England prior to the landing on the continent. Divided as she is, she does not pose the threat to world peace that she did prior to the First and Second World War.

<sup>93</sup>Ludwig Zimmermann. Deutsche Aussenpolitik in der Ara der Weimarer Republik. (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1958), p. 75.

As far as the German leaders were concerned, joining the League would facilitate those ends and grant permission by default to rearm. When, a very few years later, it became uncomfortable to continue on her course because of disapprobation within the League, she quickly withdrew.<sup>94</sup> She had, in the meantime, built up her strength so that she could leave with impunity.

One of the reasons that it was so difficult for Germany to enter the League was that she was unable to explain her true reasons for joining to the various domestic factions who were opposed. Had she done so, she might have built a consensus at home, but the League would then surely not have invited her membership.<sup>95</sup> It was Dr. Stresemann who managed, through incredibly adroit maneuvering, to forge agreement out of severely antipathetic factions. The parties on the right were inexorably opposed to the Versailles Treaty and anything connected with it.<sup>96</sup> They resented most strongly the "guilt clause," the reparations, and the fact that the League itself had been made a part of the Treaty. It was

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<sup>94</sup>Germany announced her withdrawal from the League on October 23, 1933, considerably less than a decade after she entered.

<sup>95</sup>It is seldom possible, for diplomatic reasons, to explain fully the reasons for foreign policy moves. Even if they could be divulged, most individuals, imperfectly informed, would still not understand.

<sup>96</sup>Turner, op. cit.

quite simply impossible for a single nation to accept sole responsibility for the most extensive and heinous conflict the world had ever known.<sup>97</sup> The reparations seemed motivated by vengeance and were otherwise deemed completely unrealistic.<sup>98</sup> This evaluation was held by many individuals outside of Germany, but the fact remains that, in the end, Germany could have paid them without suffering much more than she did by reneging.<sup>99</sup> Obviously, if Germany could not accept guilt for the war, she would not accept the reparations exacted of her. For, if she were merely the loser in a war, she could well look upon the terms of the treaty as excessive and vindictive. They must be understood in relationship to the guilt clause. It is the difference between the sentences meted out for first-degree murder and manslaughter.

There was and is in Germany, as well as in every other part of the world, a sincere belief that not only is war natural to man, it is a positive good.<sup>100</sup> The theory popularized by Darwin, survival of the fittest, in some ways shocked the world and disturbed its complacency. But in and of itself,

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<sup>97</sup> Foerster does not agree with this, he insists that it was not only possible but necessary for Germany and the world. He feared the consequences of an unrepentant Germany. The Second World War had not yet begun.

Foerster, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>98</sup> The general opinions of most commentators past and present accords with this—See Eyck, Vol. I, p. 106.

<sup>99</sup> Foerster, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>100</sup> Bernhardt, op. cit., p. 11.



it holds a strong attraction in general for fascists and racists in particular. In war one observed this theory operating at its highest level. War, according to Prussian thinking, is a necessary and beneficial state of affairs. It does away with the weaklings of society and gives the strong man a chance to become heroes. Without war, it is held by some, civilization is doomed.<sup>101</sup> Above all other groups, the Prussians exemplify this attitude.<sup>102</sup> External peace for them would be immoral, an unnatural state. The League, however, is founded upon the principle that war ought to be excluded as a means of settling international disputes. The First World War certainly demonstrated the impotence of war as a dispute-settling mechanism. For it did not settle anything. The proof of this could be seen in the inexorable movement toward a second and even more dreadful world conflict. The seeds for that war were already sown by the time the peace was settled. Those who were responsible for putting together the League as a functioning organization and working within its framework were far less advanced in their thinking than the theorists who established its principles, and what is more important, did not give it their full measure of understanding.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>102</sup> Foerster, op. cit., p. 15.

For the British Foreign Office, the Covenant was conceived as an improved and enlarged Concert of Europe, so for President Wilson the Covenant was an improved and enlarged Monroe Doctrine.<sup>103</sup> In accord with this reasoning, the British did not want guarantees written into the Covenant. Since they conceived the League as rather a more institutionalized continuation of the cooperation of the great powers, they did not want obligations as part of the arrangement.<sup>104</sup> There was no tradition upon which to found such a system, and lacking such, there was utter pessimism as to its efficacy. Considering the British attitude toward this question, and their refusal to concur in the Japanese efforts to include in the Covenant a statement relating to discrimination because of race or nationality, one wonders what they expected to create with this new League.

The French, at least the jurists, seemed more amenable to the spirit of the League as enunciated by Wilson. Part of the reason for this is the French legal system and, hence, the French legal mind. The legal settlement of disputes reaches for its touchstone toward a fairly high level of jurisprudence. An international court of arbitration could not be established on common-law principles. In order for such a court to begin

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<sup>103</sup>Zimmern, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

functioning in an already complex world it would have, of necessity, to work from a full set of codified laws. Furthermore, in settling a case at arbitration, previous cases may not be cited as ruling precedents.<sup>105</sup> It is acknowledged that each case is unique, that the circumstances, considering the nations involved, and the complex and ever changing relationships among nations, make it impossible to apply the findings of one cast to any other. Of course, the previous verdicts are recorded and referred to for insight, but they do not constitute a determining factor to the resolution of any subsequent case. An international court then must operate on the basis of civil law. A court system founded on such principles of necessity must concern itself more with evolving theory, and in this area the French jurists were particularly adept. They were better prepared to view the League as an entirely new system.<sup>106</sup> And they were more willing, in theory, to experiment. In reality, it was the politics of the situation that ruled.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>J. L. Brierly. "The Law of Nations" (New York: Odford University Press, 1961), p. 64.

<sup>106</sup>Zimmern, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>107</sup>Visscher, op. cit., p. 75. "La Paix du monde ne s'organise pas dans l'asstrait. L'organisation internationale, à quelque moment ou dans quelque moment ou dans quelques conditions qu'elle se constitue, naît dans un climat politique donné."

Sentiment and even intellect can carry the behavior of nations only so far, after which a more basic factor becomes operative and finally determinative, that of survival. Just as with individuals, states revert immediately to primitive behavior under extraordinary circumstances. War is such a circumstance. In the last extremity, a state employs those methods which are most familiar, and when time is wanting, judges the actions of other states on the basis of historical analysis which may be archaic and obsolete to such degree that it is completely inoperative as a motivating factor in that state's behavior.<sup>108</sup>

There were then, on the part of the allies, two rival conceptions of the League:

For Britain it remained a co-operative association of independent states. For the French it was an incomplete project of a super-state.<sup>109</sup>

Just as the French view was conditioned by their civil law heritage, the ancient legal institutions and systems of Great Britain prepared her to approach the Covenant as she did with an attitude of reluctance toward specifying in advance what action members were to take under given circumstances. It was the habit of the British nation, very pragmatically to deal with situations as they arose in whatever manner which seemed best suited for the occasion. In the operation of the vast

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<sup>108</sup> Foerster, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>109</sup> Zimmern, op. cit., p. 346.

British Empire, such flexibility was well tailored to the heterogeneous needs of situations which at times required what appeared to be conflicting policies. In order to understand a nation which operates in this fashion, it is necessary to study its history over an extended period gradually building up a framework against which the individual acts and policies of the nation may be evaluated. With regard to the appreciation that both Germany and France had of British motivation, Zimmern wrote:

In spite of their constant contacts with British statesmen, extending in M. Briand's case over a great many years, both he and Herr Stresemann were fundamentally ignorant about Great Britain and the British Commonwealth.<sup>110</sup>

This lack of understanding between states made the work of founding the League more difficult and doomed its functioning, at least in the more essential areas, to frustration and ultimate failure.<sup>111</sup> It precluded the possibility for meaningful dialogue, and was largely responsible for the fact that while the members came to accept the principles of the League in theory, they had not the slightest belief in their practical application. The machinery for keeping the peace was in existence, but no one cared to push the button,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>111</sup> Visscher, op. cit., p. 81.

neither those who believed the machinery would work, nor those who were certain it would not; the former because they could not, in the final moment, accept that which contradicted their tradition, heredity, and experience; the latter for obvious reasons.

The majority of Germans belonged to the two categories above. Under those circumstances, the question imposes itself as to how they determined upon membership in that organization. Returning to the view of politics as the art of the possible, their action was quite appropriate. The man who led them through it then, Gustave Stresemann, must be admired for the successful manner in which he practiced the art. That this involved duplicity on the level of official pronouncement of policy was inevitable.<sup>112</sup> To provide a completely detailed account of all the factors taken into consideration in the formulation of policy would be impossible, and if somehow achieved, would itself prove a falsehood. There is no other course open to the leader of a nation. In the bargaining process that is international politics he must try for the best deal he can get. The language he employs to sell it to both sides can not usually be identical. Gatzke in his monograph on rearmament following World War I, implies that

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<sup>112</sup> Gatzke, op. cit., p. 111. "If this policy was two-faced that was not entirely Stresemann's fault."

Stresemann might have been lying when he steered Germany into the League.<sup>113</sup> A recent study of Stresemann and his politics takes the position that the answer is the most obvious: he simply was extremely pragmatic, or, more specifically, a pragmatic conservative.<sup>114</sup> Where the line between pragmatism and opportunism is drawn remains a valid question. His transition from opponent to proponent of the new regime constitutes the most controversial facet of his career. The explanations most often proffered are those of conversion or the above mentioned opportunism, the choice usually coinciding with the tone of the critique. Whatever the case, the political situation within Germany after the war was near-chaos. Steering anything through such a morass in continual flux required incredible dexterity. A simple narration of the facts makes one dizzy. The most intricate, and at the same time most significant, maneuvering was that employed in the ratification of the Locarno Treaty which had as an added effect Germany's entry into the League.<sup>115</sup> This dual nature constituted both a help and a hindrance in this regard. Hindenburg, then president, still vitally important to the decision-making process, was unalterable opposed to German membership in the League. He was, however, favorably disposed to the Locarno

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<sup>113</sup>Gatzke, op. cit., 115.

<sup>114</sup>Turner, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

Pact, largely won over through the efforts of Hans Luther, Chancellor of Germany. Stresemann's diplomacy had to be exercised with the same skill in the handling of the factions within Germany, and the multiple interests on the foreign scene. In large measure, this meant playing one off against the other. To French Foreign Minister Briand, for example, he insisted that he must have certain concessions to placate the German National Peoples Party (DNVP).<sup>116</sup> To the recalcitrant splinter parties he argues that Germany must agree to various proposals in order to win the trust of France and so, by acceptance into the League, reap benefits in every quarter. To indicate the broad compass of Stresemann's thought, it is important to note that he viewed the responsibilities, and at the same time the opportunities, of the League in the economic sphere very seriously.<sup>117</sup> To what degree this too constituted a motivating factor in Stresemann's drive for German membership in the League can not be measured. Most important, however, was the more basic question of Germany's place in the sun. Beyond the respect that would naturally accrue to the holder of a permanent seat in the League Council was the fact that Germany could best look after her own interests from within one of the deliberative bodies that concerned itself with questions that must affect

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>117</sup> Zimmern, op. cit., p. 363.



her well-being. As a permanent member of the League Council she would enjoy a veto power with regard to any League business that affected her vital interests. In the process of drawing up the Covenant of the League, certain presuppositions had profound effects upon its operation as well as on its theoretical foundations. One such premise was the concept of universality of membership.<sup>118</sup> This meant that the founders of the League felt that relations among nations could be better controlled if the nations were within rather than outside the organization. Unfortunately, theory was not supported by practice. The question of sanctions against members was less complicated. The relationship between the member nations of the League could be specifically defined. But it is much more difficult to negotiate terms with a party when the very framework of the negotiations must first be determined upon, and there is no casual way to initiate talks. This remained the common belief in spite of the widespread skepticism with regard to the efficacy of the League machinery for settling disputes. Thus most of the members of the League were anxious for Germany to join the League, including her archenemy, France. The British, who as indicated above, conceived the League as an institutionalization of the balance of power, considered that

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<sup>118</sup> Bolz, op. cit.

that balance was best achieved by having Germany a member, and furthermore a permanent member, of the Council. Germany was an integral part of Europe. She was, of necessity, a part of the mainstream that was generating a modern international world "characterized by general conventions of wide scope but uncertain duration."<sup>119</sup> The League created a great "stream of perpetual international activity."<sup>120</sup> After signing the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was not kindly disposed toward the League. Her relationship with that organization was "very queer and awkward." According to Walter Simons, Chief Justice of the Supreme Federal Court of Germany:

She had been forced to sign the Covenant but was not allowed to become a member; she had all the obligations but none of the rights of membership. This mark of utter disdain shown by a society of twenty-seven nations against a people they had invited to sign a peace treaty embittered the Germans, the great majority of whom were, after the War, quite willing to take a heavy load on their shoulders in order to restore good will between themselves and their former enemies.<sup>121</sup>

It must be remembered, however, that this was not a situation involving equals--it concerned victors and vanquished. As to the idea that Germany was forced to sign the Versailles Treaty, that is quite true. So recalcitrant were they in that regard

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<sup>119</sup> Simons, International Law since Grotius, p. 131

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

that it was feared that after five brutalizing years of fighting, the allied would once more have to resort to arms to make Germany sign the document.<sup>122</sup> As to the allegation that she was burdened with obligations without concurring rights, the fact is that the obligations were a part of the Treaty of which the League was also a part. It was under the Treaty, not the Covenant, that the obligations occurred. It was no surprise to anyone that the League proved unequal to the task of resolving the political problems of the world. On the other hand, it did prove amazingly successful in its evolution as an administrative entity. It carried forward the practice of general technical conferences relating to problems of commerce, health, labor, and traffic, and especially economic matters. The fact that the League was weak politically and strong economically is precisely what attracted Germany who never fully accepted its political role, but was desperately interested in economic development. Against this approach, Briand had managed to forge a vision which reconciled very broad international issues with national French interests. It was through his collaboration with Stresemann that German membership was effected.<sup>123</sup> When Stresemann used party factions as a lever

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<sup>122</sup> Eyck, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 102.

<sup>123</sup> For his part, Briand was awarded the Nobel peace Prize, in 1926, the year Germany became a member of the League.

to gain French concessions, Briand, in his turn, held up the intransigence of Poincare as a countermeasure. On the whole, the attitude of the French leaders toward German entrance into the League was far better than one might have supposed on the part of the chief sufferer under the German military onslaught. It is true that the French were largely responsible for keeping Germany out of the League directly after the war.<sup>124</sup> It was France which was the most insistent instigator of the reparations terms which were construed as disguised vengeance. Yet her belief in the mode of operation of the League and the nature of the relationships established thereby was closer to the idea of the founders than that of her sister states. One of the great German commentators, Foerster, felt that his country would only learn how to behave in the modern international world by accepting the guilt clause that proved so obnoxious to them, so necessary to the French, and so controversial to all nations.<sup>125</sup> Penance must be done if Germany were to assume her rightful place among the major nations of the earth. Unfortunately, a collective conscience is not made stronger by the number

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<sup>124</sup> Eyck, op. cit., Vol I, p. 112.

<sup>125</sup> Professor Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster was editor of the pacifist magazine, "Die Menschheit" in Wiesbaden. He was the butt of an attack by Stresemann who viewed his complaints of secret German rearmament as injurious to Germany's interests.

of individuals involved. The idea that harsh terms of peace would teach Germany that she had sinned against her fellow states and so force her to mend her ways seems to go beyond human experience. An analogy can be drawn between national and individual conscience, but the comparison remains an analogy, it does not become an identity. It might be possible for an individual to go through painful self-analysis and, in the process of revelation, experience catharsis. A nation can not go quite that far. It would have taken the most fundamental and universal understanding on the part of the German people to accomplish such a change of character. This they could not do for several reasons.

Given the historical setting of Europe in the early twentieth century, no state could have survived which was given to basic self-doubt.<sup>126</sup> After the unprecedented catastrophe of World War I, those nations most sorely affected lived on by power of will alone. All power of whatever variety is limited. The amount of power that can be exercised over an area is inversely proportionate to the extent of the area. Germany could not exercise the mania that made her an outlaw in the war and still preserve her socio-economic viability. To discard her philosophy would have been tantamount to giving up her nationhood. When Foerster cried out in alarm over the

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<sup>126</sup> Visscher, op. cit., p. 81.

dangers inherent in German philosophy he could not have known what he presaged.<sup>127</sup> In his darkest thoughts he could not have imagined the facts of World War II. It was only after that second holocaust that scholars returned to the philosophy of which Foerster spoke, to discover in more detailed and orderly fashion, what he was talking about.

In crisis situations it is axiomatic that the behavior of individuals and states alike reverts to primordial responses.<sup>128</sup> In the face of present danger, the act or reaction of self-preservation is not experimental. It is experiential. Even when the situation itself is the result of, or in the context of, an experiment, final resort will be to learned responses. One may examine briefly the Bolshevik Revolution which was, in many ways, a wholly new experiment. When the revolution was threatened from within, the machinery of the old Tsarist state was employed to sustain it. When it was threatened from without by annihilation at the hands of the German forces, the atheistic Communists implored the Church to exhort its members to fight for God and country. It was no longer "Fight for the party," but "Fight for Holy Mother Russia."

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<sup>127</sup> Erich Eyck, writing in 1956 said, "Today who can still accuse Foerster of having painted too black a picture or of having exaggerated?" Eyck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 132.

<sup>128</sup> Weber, op. cit.

This same period witnessed the Socialists making great strides in all the countries of Europe.<sup>129</sup> Several legislatures had a considerable representation of Socialists, and in France, the premiership was held by a man who designated himself a socialist. Socialist ideology was at a peak, and recruitment among the workers grew apace. A significant tenet of this theory was an avowed love for peace. If the countries of Europe declared war, the socialists would declare peace by refusing to fight in the armies or even to work to sustain the war effort. In the end, the first note of martial music banished every other tune from the heads of these international stalwarts.<sup>130</sup> Instead of the generals bowing before the anticipated general strike of the workers, the workers disposed themselves to obey the generals. The real had not kept pace with the ideal.

The League of Nations as envisioned before the war had as one of its characteristics the insistence upon universality of membership. It was, however, the old idea of membership restricted to civilized nations with Europe as the center of gravity. Even after the outbreak of hostilities, members of both sides of the conflict worked on the basis of

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<sup>129</sup> Harvey Goldberg. The Life of Jean Jaures. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 455.

<sup>130</sup> Tuchman, op. cit., p. 462.

universality, or at least their thoughts included the membership of defeated nations.<sup>131</sup> While the concept of the League was fast growing from an ivory-towered dream to a factor of real politics, there was still an admixture of idealism, of expected behavior, of theory which was yet too advanced for the real world, a world which included "back-room" politicians; which included, on the parts of many participants from the more democratic nations, accountability to constituents. The constituents were not accounted for in earlier discussion of the League. The question then was moot; there was no need to go beyond assumptions. But at the moment of truth, things do not always fall into place as it was presumed they would. Little rough edges suddenly can stop the entire process. What could not be accounted for in theory suddenly became vital. What was ignored because it could not be measured or could not be predicted with accuracy at once constituted an insurmountable obstacle.

So it is with the idealist, the great humanitarian who loves mankind but hates his neighbors. So even the ancient hatred of French for German became the ruling factor in the exclusion of Germany from League membership. It is possible to suppose that if Italy did not behave as usual and change sides in mid-course she would have enjoyed a better chance of

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<sup>131</sup>Eyck, op. cit., p. 112. Jäckh, op. cit also discusses this question.



being accepted in the League even though she ended the war on the wrong side as a defeated nation. To be sure, there were other significant differences. No one particularly feared Italy. She did not have the potential for world conquest or domination, even though her attack on Ethiopia was allowed to pass unchecked by the members of the League when that body voted sanctions some years later.

There is more to the failure of the United States finally to join the League than that President Wilson used poor political judgment in not bringing with him to the proceedings members of the Senate who must approve treaties made by the chief executive, and representatives from the opposing political party who must play a part in so dramatic a step as United States involvement in the fabric of European and world political affairs. Americans still nurtured grave suspicions of the Continent. The words of George Washington abjuring involvement in foreign affairs are engraved as an ineradicable part of their personality and character. It is the view of one German historian that: "The Europeans did in fact concede the League of Nations to the President as a whim..."<sup>132</sup> Indeed, the continental mentality more and more determined the actual operation of the League.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Dehio, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

Thus when the final moment arrived, the reaction was irrational, based upon responses that could not be measured and hence were not weighted properly in the assessment of the League founders. When imponderables do exist, there is always the tendency to give them too much or too little account when reckoning a course of action. The problem is similar to determining which facet of man's nature governs his existence. If one subscribes to the notion that he is a rational creature, one must predicate rationality as the decisive factor in determining his course of action. It is very unpleasant for the idealist to contemplate overlong the irrational side of man's behavior.

Final determination of the governing principles of membership in an international organization seems as yet no more susceptible to concrete resolution than is the question of admitting a specific State. The problem is epitomized in the case of Germany's admission to the League.

In a paper on the League delivered before the Grotius Society in 1917, F. N. Keen stated: "The inclusion of any States that are regarded as likely disturbers of the peace is particularly desirable, for they will be more easily controlled if they are inside, than if they are outside the League."<sup>134</sup> Across the Atlantic nearly one year later William

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<sup>134</sup> Grotius Society proceedings, Vol. II, 1917, p. 131.

Howard Taft addressed the convention of the League to Enforce Peace at Madison, Wisconsin. On the question of whether Germany should be let into the League, he asserted: "That depends upon whether Germany makes herself fit for the League."<sup>135</sup> She must show by her actions that she has learned the lessons "which the war should teach her." Taft did not elaborate at the time on how Germany was to demonstrate her fitness for membership, but France was later to use this approach and be very specific about what was to be deemed sufficient proof for redemption.

President Woodrow Wilson, who was personally so much responsible for the League, had in mind a homogeneous League of democratic nations. In a speech delivered at Oakland, California, in September of 1919, Wilson said: "You read in the newspapers that there are intrigues going on in Germany for the restoration of something like the old government... very well, if that should be accomplished, Germany is for-ever excluded from the League of Nations. It is not our business to say to the German people what sort of government they shall have...but it is our business to say whom we will keep company with."

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<sup>135</sup> William Howard Taft. The Obligations of Victory, an address delivered at the convention of the League to Enforce Peace at Madison, Wisconsin, under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin, November 9, 1918.

Neither the Americans nor the British realized the absolute necessity of getting away from the sovereign state.<sup>136</sup> In this sense one might speak of an Anglo-American conception of the League which derived from the fact that England, as well as the United States, had in a very real sense been outside most wars and troubles.<sup>137</sup> England had played the policy of the balance of power. Thus she wanted a "round table" where diplomats could exhibit the results of their works. The French, according to the position espoused by Leon Bourgeois<sup>138</sup> who laid such stress on Article Nine of the Covenant, did see the necessity of evolving a society capable of preserving international law and order, with provision for peaceful change. There must be an authority which is in some way supranational. This concept in no way militated against the French taking an approach toward Germany that would insure here exclusion from the original membership in the League and delay her entry tragically long.

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<sup>136</sup>The term "absolute necessity" obviously does not stand as a prerequisite for survival, but rather for the insured success of a meaningful and viable international organization.

<sup>137</sup>Walters, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>138</sup>Leon Bourgeois was President of the Council of State of France, and served as the first president of the League of Council.

#### IV. THE ENTRANCE OF GERMANY INTO THE LEAGUE

In 1918 at the Reichstag a debate was held regarding the League of Nations. Friedrich Naumann protested:

It puzzles many and myself that in the thinking regarding the League, as Wilson puts it to us, everything is already prepared in "einzelnen." We must look upon it as the foremost problem in the world...But to Germans it is no strange work. Where did the idea of "Menschenheitsentwicklung" stem from? Not originally from Lloyd George and Wilson...it is much older and deeper, for example in the work of Lessing: "Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts", or Kant: "Vom ewigen Frieden"...and a whole brilliant row of great thinkers up to Hegel. It was the thought in which the generation of our grandfathers was realized. We must sit again at the feet of our ancestors and learn from the spring of wisdom how we can grow well after this unbelievable upheaval.<sup>139</sup>

The magazine "Die Hilfe" proclaimed: If the German people were convinced of the efficacy of the League, Wilson would have no finer partners. After so much war we wish more than any other nation for demilitarization.<sup>140</sup>

There is, according to German historians, an overwhelming history of German thought in the direction of an

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<sup>139</sup>Jäckh, op. cit., p. 9. Translation by author.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

organization for ensuring the peace. It is a product of the most mystical thinkers of Germany, her greatest philosophers. The question which logically follows is whether or not this spirit was alive during the Great War.

Reference may be made in this regard to many contemporary articles which present impressive evidence that such spirit was not only alive but had moved into the realm of the political.<sup>141</sup> The specialist in international law, Walter Schucking, wrote powerfully for such an idea in "Der Weltfriedensbund," 1916, and "Der Bund der Völker," 1917. He even suggested, in 1915, to Bethmann-Hollweg's Secretary of State Zimmermann that the administration ought to officially acknowledge the "Volkererbundgedanken." The immediate retort was characteristic for the regime wherein the political weakness contrasted with the influence of the military: "Yes, professor, but if we were to do that, what would our generals and naval officers say to us?"

This factor is not to be forgotten: the government even before the war, but especially during it, was in practice subordinate to the military. So deeply, however, was the idea of the League ingrained in the German mind, even the height of war did not remove it. On the twenty-second of May 1916, Bethmann-Hollweg, during an interview, joined Sir Edward

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<sup>141</sup> Jahresversammlung des Deutschen Werkbundes, 14 Juni, 1916.

Grey in a statement supporting a situation "in which free and equal nations reduced their armaments and settled their differences through arbitration instead of war." Later on, in November of that year, Bethmann-Hollweg said: "Germany is prepared at any time to join a League..."<sup>142</sup>

The press at the time gave seemingly unified assent. Hans Delbruck wrote in the "Preussischen Jahrbuchern:" "Pacifism is no longer a movement of ideals and dreams, but a broadly based need of peoples and states, and to embrace pacifism is truly political reality."

Ernst Jackh expressed the conviction that a new order was to be established no matter who was the victor in the war.<sup>143</sup> He made this assertion a full six months before a like sentiment was enunciated by Woodrow Wilson.

All the political parties in Germany shared this view except the Conservatives. The Cabinet was agreed upon entrance into the League and repeated its willingness to ratify such a move as late as the 24th of April, 1919. That was, of course, before Versailles. Finally, in Versailles itself there was an exchange of notes between the German peace delegation and

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<sup>142</sup> It should be kept in mind that these sentiments were being expressed by the regime, and were not shared by the military, nor by members from opposition parties. They were then, the expression of a minority.

<sup>143</sup> Jackh-Schwarz, op. cit.

Georges Clemenceau. The result was negative.

By the end of January 1921, at the international Conference in Paris, a formal objection against the acceptance to membership of Germany was announced. The League was established not only without the German nation, "but even against the German nation." Germany was to be made to feel "as an outlaw, as morally depraved."<sup>144</sup>

The actuality was that the League was not a new order but an instrument of maintaining the difference between victor and vanquished. Arnold J. Toynbee, noted historian, in one of a series of discussions held at Chatham House, London, maintained that:

As the Germans see it, and they see it more clearly though not necessarily more truly, the victors imposed peace on their defeated enemies, and, in order to maintain the settlement, decided to rope in outsiders. The League is also, as the Germans see it, an attempt to circumvent Nature; and its "unnaturalness" is a still more serious flaw than its "injustice" since the law of Nature is not fixity but mutability.<sup>145</sup>

H. G. Wells said in the same vein: "The League of Nations is an organization which was imposed on them (Germany) to keep them down by force to the advantage of the victor." In his

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<sup>144</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, participating in discussions at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London, 1936.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.



book: "American Diplomacy," G. F. Kennan concluded that"... the progress of World War I did not bring reasonableness, or humility, or the spirit of compromise to the warring peoples."<sup>146</sup>

In spite of all, the allied nations gradually grew out of their war psychosis of the traditional enemy, slowly to a rational political position. For Germany is the geographical heart of Europe. Europe can no live without its heart, not can Germany live without its body. The way of Germany into the League was long, and the League itself a quite different entity that that envisioned by the various League of Nations societies around the world. Europe stood on the threshold of a new age, but it stepped back, not forward. Why had the hoped-for birth of a new world order ended in miscarriage?

The defeat which came to the German armies and their allies was as sudden as it was catastrophic. The German people in general believed almost to the last that they were going to emerge victorious. The "Memoirs" of General Erich Ludendorff<sup>147</sup> indicate that on the eighth of August 1918, it burst upon his consciousness that the morale of the army was giving way. By the end of that month he informed the Chancellor that there must be no delay in seeking for peace. In the two months following,

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<sup>146</sup> Kennan, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>147</sup> Erich Ludendorff, Meine Kriegserinnerungen, 1914-1918, Berlin, 1919.

the people became aware of their plight and it became apparent that they were hard against the face of unconditional surrender. The political situation was in chaos, and the stabilizing force of the military dissipated into confusion. Conditions in Germany were far worse in all respects than anything experienced by the Allies. The so called "turnip winter" of 1916-1917 had exacted a heavy toll of forbearance, and all the tremendous suffering and endless endurance of the people of that nation had availed them naught.

The German Empire of the half-century culminating in World War I was powerful to be sure. But it would have to be described as an autocracy, and so, in the end, vulnerable, for the roots of such systems do not go deeply into the soil. History teaches that such forms of government are the most likely to be overthrown by revolution. Allegiance there may be, but it is to the rulers, not the government. If those rulers should lose their coercive powers or charismatic attractions, the bonds of obedience are severed and with them the confidence and support of the people. The Germans particularly are practiced in obedience. But as in all things there are limits, and when these have been exceeded the inevitable result is revolution. So it was in Germany. The old regime had excited great enthusiasm and pride among the vast majority of its citizens. Yet no one raised a hand or gun to stay the

sweeping away of the government or its dynastic members. What saved the nation from untold additional violence and bloodshed was the Socialist Party which was well organized, moderate, and strong. There was also at work the character of the people themselves which was so given to orderly conduct of affairs. For example, after the turn of the century, the various socialist parties of Europe met in Germany to discuss the overall party program. Among the questions to be resolved was that of the status of the party and its individual members regarding peace, and more particularly, the conduct of war. Socialist theory rejects war as a means of settling disputes between nations. Furthermore, there were some socialists who believed that war at this time would hasten the demise of Capitalism. They were doubly interested in seeing that the working-class people did not support the war effort in any way. The question was how to express this as international socialist policy. As far as the German party was concerned, they would not call a general strike to express their opposition to the war, nor would they refuse to fight. As one of the leaders of the German socialists put it: The Germans were far too accustomed to obedience and an orderly civil life to engage in wholesale anarchy. They were also too strongly imbued with the notion of Vaterland not to respond to a call to arms. This is, of course, a very general statement. The exceptions were numerous

and important. Nonetheless, the Socialists had already taken office in the Coalition Cabinet under Prince Max of Baden, and so were in strategic positions to take control when order was most sorely needed. The party managed, at a very critical period, to suppress the dangerously anarchistic Spartacists, and to provide instead for general elections with universal franchise a scant two months after the revolution.<sup>148</sup>

Prince Max von Baden had handed the presidency over to Friedrich Ebert in 1919 who directed Hugo Preuss, a Berlin professor, to draw up an outline for a Constitution for the Republic. Considerable work had been done before the new Parliament met at Weimar, and this formed the basis for committee discussion. The outline received extensive alteration before being accepted in 1919. One of the chief factors eliminated was a scheme for dividing the influence of Prussia. The result, nonetheless, was the creation of a truly democratic document. Each member state must be republican in form, and ultimate power resides in the people. Further, states' rights were limited and the Federation more closely knit than under the Constitution of Bismarck.

Procedures for implementing the democratic principle are of especial note. Universal suffrage was extended to such

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<sup>148</sup> Max von Baden. Erinnerungen und Dokumente, Stuttgart, 1920.

degree as to comprise more than fifty per cent of the population. The president was popularly elected, but had only limited powers. Electoral districts were determined geographically without regard for state boundaries. An added novelty, the Reichsliste, produced a situation in which the individual candidate was virtually eliminated to the aggrandizement of the strongest and best organized Parties. The implications of this were to be felt much later in the history of the Weimar Republic.

In the course of framing the Constitution the German people retrieved a measure of hope for the future of the Republic. But at that moment the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were announced.<sup>149</sup> The Weimar Assembly was split asunder. There were those among the allies who feared that hostilities would have to be renewed before Germany would accept the terms of settlement. The treaty was accepted largely through the auspices of Matthias Erzberger, perhaps the most influential man in the government at the time.<sup>150</sup> The result, however, was the rise of the extreme Right. Resentment against the treaty was focused upon the Socialists who were so largely responsible for its acceptance. The most bitter reaction to the treaty was provoked by the clause therein which

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<sup>149</sup> Matthias Erzberger. Der Völkerbund, der Weg zum Welt Frieden, Berlin, 1918.

<sup>150</sup> Matthias Erzberger, Erlenbniss im Weltkrieg, Stuttgart, 1920.

held that the entire responsibility for the outbreak of the war was placed on the shoulders of Germany and her allies. Indeed, the Schuldfrage has perdured even to this day. Included, for good or ill, as part and parcel of the Treaty of Versailles was the Covenant of the League of Nations. That a world organization of sovereign and equal states should be bound up with a treaty forcing terms of peace and reparations upon defeated nations must certainly be considered unfortunate. It was, in the mind of its foremost proponent, President Wilson, a political necessity. In his view, if it were not made a part of the terms of peace, once the peace was settled it might never come into existence. Such might well be the case. But in making it a facet of the peace settlement it became identified as a instrument of the victors in subduing the vanquished. Though virtually all the world was at one time or another represented within its assembly, it retained the aura of a political alliance. First the Allied powers versus the Axis nations, then the Democratic states versus the Bolsheviks, then again the Allied nations versus the Axis powers. It is against this concept that German progress toward the League is to be studied.

The German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, was profoundly impressed by Sir Edward Grey's enunciation of the desirability of an association of nations. He asserted that Germany would

not only join such a body, but take an active lead in it. In the midst of the war, before there was any inkling of the impending German defeat, Matthias Erzberger began working on what was to be the first draft of a plan for a League of Nations offered by any of the nations involved in the conflict.<sup>151</sup>

His scheme was an elaborate one which went beyond the Covenant in calling for the compulsory arbitration of all disputes. It must be said that this was a favorite theme of British thinkers, who, for the most part, had little use for the idea of maintaining peace through organization. But as yet they had not produced any detailed plans of any sort. All parties did finally get about the work of drafting serious plans, but the main author of the scheme as ultimately prevailed was President Wilson. This fact of itself provoked antagonism on the German side for they felt Wilson had forsaken them in the Peace Treaty. There remained, of course, in addition to this, the overbearing weight of the victorious powers. Countering this was the strong inclination of the parties on the Left and Center to join with this new institution in building a peaceful and democratic world.<sup>152</sup> There is little doubt that if Germany had been invited into the League at the time of its formation, she would certainly have accepted. Such was the avowed wish

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<sup>151</sup>Eyck, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 12.

<sup>152</sup>Jäckh, op. cit.

of the delegations from England and the United States. In the end, French intransigence prevailed, and the course of history changed.<sup>153</sup>

From his position as party leader, Stresemann used his strength in that capacity to support his foreign policy. His operations in foreign affairs, for example, the successful conclusion he wrought out of the Ruhr-reparations dispute, seemed too subtle to be appreciated by the electorate. But Stresemann was sure in the end that his accomplishments would show themselves on the domestic scene. With this in mind he intended to exploit his achievements abroad to solidify his position at home. The elections of December 1924, confirmed Stresemann in the path of his own slogan "primacy of foreign policy." Heretofore he had concentrated equally on the domestic implications of his foreign policy and approached the two areas coordinately. After the elections the president of Germany, Ebert, asked him to form a government. This he agreed to do with the condition that if he did not succeed in building a coalition cabinet (which meant bringing in the Nationalists) he would refuse the chancellorship. The Centre balked at a rightist coalition, and a crisis resulted which was resolved by the naming of Hans Luther, then Minister of Finance, as the new chancellor. Stresemann's role as king-maker in this

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<sup>153</sup> Herbert Kraus. Zur Frage des Eintritts Deutschlands in den Völkerbund, Tübingen, 1925.



instance was evident to all observers. He had achieved a special position among the rulers of the Weimar Republic. No workable government could be formed without the Deutsche Volkspartei of which Stresemann was chairman. Finally, his success in foreign affairs made him one of the most important and indispensable men in Germany both as regards their domestic and foreign policy. The nature of the Versailles Treaty profoundly affected the internal situation in Germany.

With the passage of time, the effects of the Peace Treaty were made manifest in both the political and economic realms. They were deleterious in the extreme, destroying virtually all German sentiment toward the League. This was due largely to action taken by the League other than the terms of peace. Chief among these were: the parition of Upper Silesia, the administration of the Saar, and the occupation of the Ruhr.<sup>154</sup>

The Upper Silesian problem fell to the League simply because the Allies themselves were unable to reach any compromise. Considering the complexity of the situation, the added involvement of a plebiscite, the League did a creditable job in resolving what was set before it. The German anger grew out of the partition itself, not the incidentals of its

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<sup>154</sup> Eyck, op. cit., pp. 155, 180, 250.

being executed. The German ire, unfortunately, knew no distinction.

The Saar situation was particularly pernicious because it represented French imperialism, a fact which would not be disguised. That the French attempted to hide behind the League only made things worse. What was nominally entrusted to the administration of the League of Nations became a pawn for France to play with.

Belief in the League as an international body received the coup de grace when France occupied the Ruhr and that question was never even officially discussed by the League. The British made some small attempt to have it recognized, but were put down at once by the veto of the French representatives.

Thus it developed that when an official invitation was sent to Berlin in the summer of 1922 to apply for membership, Germany declined. Such was the turnabout that she now insisted that certain of her conditions be met before she would enter the League. She would not come in as merely one of the members of the Assembly. She must have her rightful place along with the Great Powers who were the permanent members of the Council. Actually, there were very few who thought that this should not be the case. It was only unseemly that Germany should so forthrightly demand it. Many Germans wished to hold out till France ended her occupation of the Ruhr, which was considered in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Others insisted that the

entire treaty be revised. But there remained in Germany strong currents in favor of her assuming a place within the League of Nations. Among these was the influence of German pacifism whose major spokesmen were leaders of high repute. The great jurists of the day also exerted themselves in behalf of League membership. And countering the agitation of the rightists was the growing representation of internationalists in the universities. No matter what the forces at play were within Germany, there was no hope for her joining the League, and previous little hope for Europe until the attitude and policy of France could be changed.

J.S. Bassett, Professor of American History, wrote:

The student of United States history well knows how deeply strike the roots of popular resentment when the penalties of war are enforced by persistent interference with the civil life of the vanquished. The Assembly of the League of Nations had not read our history deeply on that point, or if they had read it, they did not dare apply its lessons. As it proved, Europe had to climb up the hill of resentment and then down again on the other side.<sup>155</sup>

The importance of Germany's place among the nations of the world can not be overestimated. Indeed, this is true of every nation, but particularly those in which feelings of nationalism are waxing. Whether one considers this a force for good or ill is of no consequence. What matters is that it is

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<sup>155</sup> John Spencer Bassett, The League of Nations: A Chapter in World Politics. (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928), p. 104.

an undeniably powerful impelling factor in the behavior of States both large and small. Of no one was this more true than Germany. She was not alone in conceiving that she possessed a rightful seat in the international body of the League. The business of Europe and the world ought not be conducted without Germany's counsel. It meant more than prestige; it meant the power to share in shaping the events of the world to which the League would bear witness. Perhaps most revealing of all regarding this point was the language of the plebiscite taken in 1933 to determine the citizens' position on German membership in the League:

The German government and the German people are therefore at one in the decision to withdraw from the Disarmament Conference and the League until this real equality is no longer withheld from our people.<sup>156</sup>

More than ninety per cent of the voters went to the polls and voted 'yes.' It must be readily granted that the case is not made that recognition as an equal was the ruling factor in this fateful decision. There was, by this time, no doubt anywhere that Germany was in the process of re-arming herself and had no intention of relinquishing a single bullet. But that does not detract from the basic desire for acceptance. As for armaments, that is one way to force respect from ones neighbors.

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<sup>156</sup> Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, X, No. 2 (28 March 1934) p. 15, As quoted from Volkischer Beobachter, 12 November 1933.

The continuing fear of Germany on the part of France coupled with the General fear of a Russian war led her to maintain a large army. This she could ill afford. It contributed to a state of apprehension and uncertainty which blocked the establishment of the harmony and confidence in Europe so necessary to the progress of the League. France's excessive concern for the war reparations exacted upon Germany made it seem as though her entire policy in the League was bent in that direction. The close association with France with the other leading members of that body could only reinforce the German notion that it was constituted for no purpose other than binding her in economic servitude.

That the reparations were unwise and unrealistic was demonstrated by their cataclysmic effect upon the German nation, and so upon the whole of Europe. French policy in the Saar and Ruhr reflected this and only made the situation worse. The state of affairs were critical. But against this background serious efforts were being made to bring about stability in all areas.

The First Assembly of the League appointed the Temporary Mixed Commission to report a plan of disarmament. Out of this evolved the Draft Treaty of Mutual Guarantee of 1922 which in turn gave rise to the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance of 1923. Though neither of these was adopted, they

served the purpose of clarifying ideas and providing a concrete form for debate in the Assembly. They were the stepping stones for the Geneva Protocol and the Locarno Treaty and Conventions. The Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, though it too failed of adoption, exerted a powerful influence on the League, and ultimately the Pact of Locarno, This last established the sorely needed political stability in Europe so essential to German entrance into the League.

Progress in this direction was aided by a liberalization of the foreign policies of France and England. This came about through political change in both these countries. In 1924 the Labor party with Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister took control of the British Parliament. That same year, some few months later, Edouard Harriot, the Socialist leader of a Liberal coalition, came to power in France. Together they marshalled support for the Dawes Commission, a plan for resolving the reparations question and alleviating the onus of Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty, the war-guilt clause.<sup>157</sup> It remained for Dr. Gustav Stresemann to finish the complicated task of bringing Germany into the League.

The political situation in Germany was complex and volatile. The left wing Socialists and Radicals held a liberal position regarding foreign affairs, and stood internally for

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<sup>157</sup> George Glasgow, From Dawes to Locarno. New York, Harper's, 1926.

the nationalization of some industry. They were the staunchest supporters of the Republic. Opposite them stood the right wing Nationalists who favored the restoration of the monarchy and were conservatives domestically. Between these extremes were the pivotal parties of the Center. They stood for the Republic and so placed it on firm ground. They were conservative domestically and so kept the nation from socialism. Most important for the League effort of Stresemann, their foreign policy attitude was liberal. The Left had its necessary majority and Stresemann his support from the Reichstag. His mandate, however, was far from solid. His policies were denounced from all sides depending upon the issue. The skill with which he played one faction against the other was nothing if not superb.<sup>158</sup>

So precarious was the political position of the government that the acceptance of the Locarno Treaty brought about its downfall. A new government was formed and set about preparing Germany's application for admission into the League of Nations. The Nationalist party continued to object, but their major points of contention were met by the French and the strength of their position dissolved. On the eighth of February 1926, the Cabinet unanimously accepted Stresemann's

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<sup>158</sup> Ferdinand Fridensburg. Die Weimarer Republik. Berlin, 1946.

draft of the note which was to be sent to the League applying for admission.

Unfortunately, great difficulties were yet to be overcome before Germany could be accepted for membership. The problems now lay on the other side. The Covenant obliged members to provide militarily for the Common defence against enemies. Germany had no army to speak of and thus could not comply with this requirement. But this disability could be and was overcome.<sup>159</sup> Of greater moment was the dispute regarding the permanent seats in the Council. Spain, out of pride, coveted a permanent seat in the Council and Brazil, as the largest state in America, thought she deserved one. Finally, Poland, with the support of France, announced her demand for a permanent seat.

It was then disclosed that Great Britain stood in support of Spain's bid. That such intrigue should infest the League of Nations was an appalling shock to the world which had so recently been infused with the spirit of Locarno. The ten-member Council, as it was established, and as it actually operated, consisted of four permanent members with three of the non-permanent members, Spain, Belgium and Brazil, having had what amounted to permanent places from the beginning. Such was the position of the interested nations that only a vital

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<sup>159</sup>Walters, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 281.



change in the structure of the Council could resolve the impasse. This entailed a considerable amount of political maneuvering which appeared at times like a game of musical chairs except that it was in earnest and the peace of the world was at stake. The way was made clear for Germany to enter the League and assume one of five permanent seats on a Council now expanded to fourteen members, nine of whom would be selected on a rotating basis. But in accomplishing this, the League lost two members, Spain and Brazil, both of which states withdrew from the League in accordance with Article I of the Covenant. It was not the happiest possible solution.<sup>160</sup>

On the eight of September 1926, the seventh Assembly passed by a unanimous vote Germany's application for membership in the League of Nations. Two days later it came time for the Assembly to admit the German delegates. Their credentials were reported in order and Stresemann, with two associates, made his entry to applause. He made a speech pledging the loyalty of Germany:

It cannot be the purpose of the Divine world order that men should direct their supreme national energies against one another, thus ever thrusting back the general progress of civilization...the cooperation of the peoples in the League of Nations must and will lead to just solutions for the moral questions which arise in the conscience of the peoples. The most durable

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<sup>160</sup>Bassett, op. cit., p. 326.

foundation of peace is a policy inspired by mutual respect between nation and nations.<sup>161</sup>

On this occasion the French representative, Briand, gave his most hopeful address before the Assembly:

Peace for Germany and for France, that means that we have done with the long series of terrible and sanguinary conflicts which have stained the pages of history. We have done with the black veils of mourning for sufferings that can never be appeased, done with war, done with brutal and sanguinary methods of settling our disputes. True, differences between us still exist, but henceforth it will be for the judge to declare the law. Just as individual citizens take their difficulties to be settled by a magistrate, so shall we bring ours to be settled by pacific procedure. Away with rifles, machine-guns, cannon! Clear the way for conciliation, arbitration, peace.<sup>162</sup>

Yet at this very moment, Stresemann and his colleagues were aware of what troubled times lay ahead. The Germany for which he spoke was that same one to whom the cult of the sword had for centuries been a religion. It still comprised the irreconcilable Nationalists, and the irrepressible militarists who lived only to the tunes of national glory. Where those discordant notes would lead could only be guessed at. The truth would reveal itself all too soon.<sup>163</sup>

On October 23, 1933, Germany announced her withdrawal from the League of Nations, and on March 16, 1935, formally

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>163</sup> Kohn, op. cit., pp. 290-297.

denounced the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles concerning her disarmament. The circle was complete.

## V. CONCLUSION

At the very least, an international organization should provide a forum for ongoing dialogue between nations. This is most true among states which are experiencing difficulties in their relationships. It is precisely they who need such a conference table. Friendly nations which have similar institutions and aspirations find themselves with multiple channels of communication. Governments generally have been reluctant to do harm to their neighbors in the midst of formalized discussion with them. When that is the intent, the first action taken is to leave the table. In the minds of many, this ought not to be allowed. The weight of public opinion grows ever heavier, and one day will not be overborne.

Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical "Pacem in Terris" wrote:

...all human beings, as they take an ever more active part in the public life of their own political communities, are showing an increasing interest in the affairs of all peoples, and are becoming more consciously aware that they are living members of a universal family of mankind.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, Part IV, p. 145.

No supranational authority can rightfully be the instrument of one-sided interests.

...the present system of organization and the way its principle of authority operated on a world basis no longer correspond to the objective requirements of the universal common good.<sup>165</sup>

This must apply as well to the League and the United Nations. Such is the interdependence of every nation in the world that no single nation or concert of states can afford to isolate itself from the world or impose isolation on any other state no matter how inimical may be its political institutions.

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., Part IV, p. 135.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A - Membership in League of Nations-Covenant:

Article 1, Paragraph 1: The original Members of the League of Nations shall be those of the Signatories which are named in the Annex to this Covenant and also such of those other States named in the Annex as shall accede without reservation to this Covenant. Such accession shall be affected by a Declaration deposited into force of the Covenant, Notice thereof shall be sent to all other Members of the League.

Article 1, Paragraph 2: Any fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony not named in the Annex may become a Member of the League if its admission is agreed to by two-thirds of the Assembly, provided that it shall give effective guarantees of its intellectual obligations, and shall accept such regulations as may be prescribed by the League in regard to its military, naval and air forces and armaments.

### Appendix B - League of Nations; Official Journal, Records of the First Assembly, Meetings of Committees, Vol II. pp. 158-159:

Dec. 1920 - 5th Committee of Assembly charged with problem of admission appointed 3 subcommittees, 7 members each and prepared the following questions in respect of each applicant which the Sub-committees were charged to investigate:

- a) Was the (applicant's) application for admissions to the League in order?
- b) Was the Government applying for admission recognized de jure or de facto and by which States?
- c) Was the applicant a nation with a stable government and settled frontiers? What were its size and its population?
- d) Was it fully self-governing?
- e) What had been its conduct, including both acts and assurances, with regard to (1) its international obligations; (11) the prescriptions of the League as to covenants?

**Appendix C - Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 16:**

- 1. Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13, 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed any act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-whether a Member of the League or not.**
- 2. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.**
- 3. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measure which are taken under this Article, in order to minimize the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are cooperating to protect the covenants of the League.**
- 4. Any Member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the Representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.**

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## PRIMARY SOURCES

### A. Unpublished Materials

No unpublished materials other than those appearing in secondary sources were used in this paper for two reasons:

1. Availability: Most of the unpublished material extant, for example, "Deutsche Volkspartei Papers", are in the national archives of East and West Germany, and the United States.

2. The scope and nature of this paper are not such as require the use of such materials.

### B. Published Materials

Much of the published primary source material relating to this paper is practically unobtainable, considering again the scope of the study, for the reason that it is located at such places as the Library of Congress, and special libraries at Harvard, et cetera. Among these would be such as Gustav Stresemann's magazine: "Deutsche Strimmen."

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### APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by R. Deane Conrad has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Feb. 4, 1969  
Date

Cory B. Herring  
Signature of Adviser